(18)

Mr Harvey Brooks
46 Brewster St
Cambridge MA 02138-2236

the American Scholar

SPRING 1996

$6.95 / $9.00 Canada

New Cavafy Poems
G. W. BOWERSOCK

Losing the Thread in Japan
MILTON EZRATI

The Right Questions About Intelligence
ROBERT J. STERNBERG

Hollywood and the Supernatural
STANLEY ROTHMAN

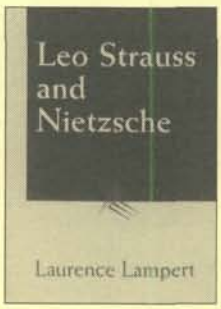
Robert Frost's Late Love
JEFFREY MEYERS

Is Music Unspeakable?
JACQUES BARZUN

Album of Bullet Holes
STANLEY KAUFFMANN

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

POLITICAL THEORY & MODERN THOUGHT



Leo Strauss and Nietzsche

LAURENCE LAMPERT

"Lampert has given us a deeply thoughtful and sensitive commentary on texts that are of foundational importance for the self-understanding of the West. This brilliant work of exposition cannot be ignored."—Alan Udoff, Baltimore Hebrew University

Cloth $22.50 238 pages

Three Discourses

A Critical Modern Edition of Newly Identified Work of the Young Hobbes

THOMAS HOBBES

Edited by Noel B. Reynolds and Arlene W. Saxonhouse

"It has taken more than 700 years, but Thomas Hobbes has a new book out. And what its editors suggest about the birth of modern political thought has reawakened an old debate and set scholars to hurling metaphorical inkpots at each other. . . The essays showed that the first Western thinker to conceive of the state as a human rather than a divine construction was not Hobbes, but Machiavelli."—William H. Honan, *New York Times*

Cloth $27.50 192 pages illus.

Nietzsche, Heidegger, and the Transition to Postmodernity

GREGORY BRUCE SMITH

"Useful and illuminating, *Nietzsche, Heidegger, and the Transition to Postmodernity* is ambitious in its undertaking, timely in its orientation, and suggestive of future research."—Steven B. Smith, Yale University

Paper $15.95 376 page Cloth edition available

CLASSICS IN POLITICAL THEORY
NOW IN NEW PAPERBACK EDITIONS

Thoughts on Machiavelli

LEO STRAUSS

Paper $16.95 348 pages

The Concept of the Political

CARL SCHMITT

Translated and with an Introduction by George Schwab

With a new Foreword by Tracy B. Strong

Paper $9.95 132 pages

Liberalism Ancient and Modern

LEO STRAUSS

Paper $15.95 288 pages

Carl Schmitt and Leo Strauss

The Hidden Dialogue

HEINRICH MEIER

Translated by J. Harvey Lomax

"A virtuoso display of textual interpretation. . . . Meier is a subtle and penetrating thinker with a relentless determination to get to the bottom of the matter. In political philosophy he is one of the best scholars I know."—Harvey C. Mansfield, Harvard University

Cloth $19.95 156 pages

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

5801 SOUTH ELLIS AVENUE, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60637

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Plessy vs. Ferguson

O.J. vs. the People of California

A hundred years ago the issue was the separation of the races. Today, race can't be separated from the issue.

Then again, everything from a prosecutor's changing hairstyles to television ratings had a go at obscuring what was supposed to be the search for justice.

Yet, if ever an event highlighted the importance of being able to separate substance from spectacle (something our society seems to have more than a little trouble doing), this trial is it.

The liberal learning that has been the foundation of an Adelphi education for the past century is, in many ways, about being able to discern true value — in everything from ideas, to the arts, to...evidence.

This doesn't mean a nation full of Adelphi graduates would have changed the outcome of Mr. Simpson's trial. It would, one hopes, simply have shortened it.

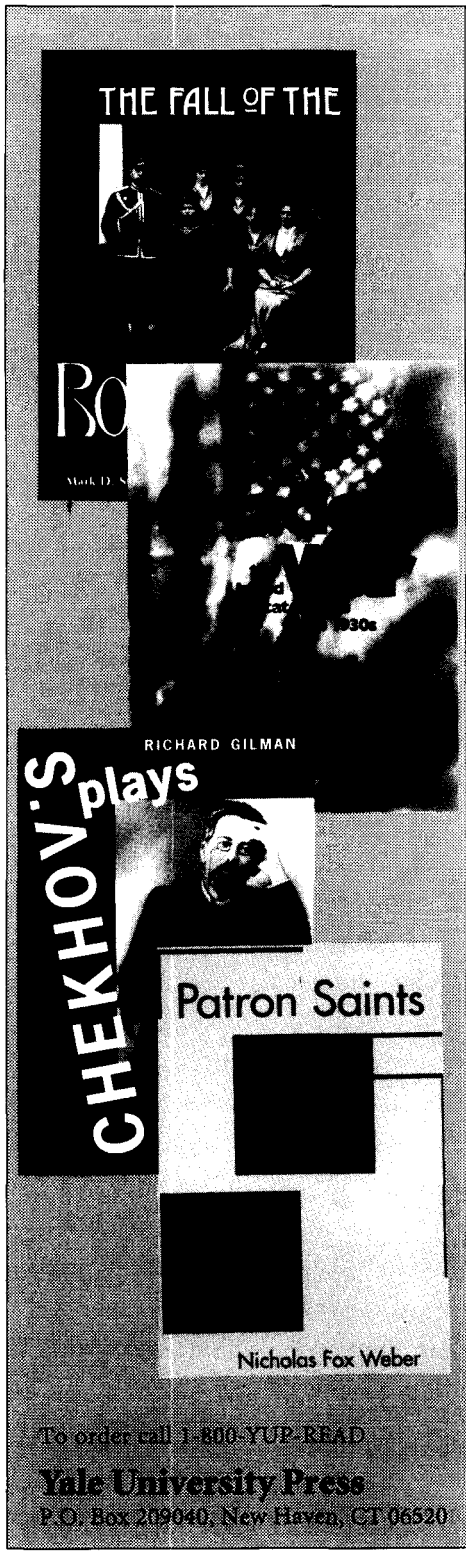
1896 1996
ADELPHI UNIVERSITY
GARDEN CITY, NY 11530

A CENTURY OF COMMITMENT TO INTELLECT

For more information, call 1-800-ADELPHI

©1996 Adelphi University

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



The Fall of the Romanovs

Political Dreams and Personal Struggles in a Time of Revolution

Mark D. Steinberg and Vladimir M. Khrustalëv

"**An extraordinary book.** It is essential reading to anyone interested in Western History."—Francine du Plessix Gray, *New York Times Book Review*

"Steinberg and Khrustalëv have achieved that rarest of things: they have produced a work of outstanding scholarship which is also an unputdownable read...the unwritten sequel to *The Brothers Karamazov.*"—Niall Ferguson, *Sunday Times* (London) 46 illus. $27.50

Annals of Communism series

In the Shadow of War

The United States since the 1930s

Michael S. Sherry

"In this seminal work Michael Sherry adds up the cost of victory in World War II and the Cold War." —Stephen E. Ambrose

"An intelligent narrative...a provocative interpretation of recent American history."--Alan Brinkley, *New York Times Book Review*

"**An impressive and very important new book.**" —Garry Wills, *The New York Review of Books* 17 illus. $35.00

Chekhov's Plays

An Opening into Eternity

Richard Gilman

"**A landmark work.** Gilman seeks to discover why Chekhov's plays affect us as they do, how we can get even closer to them, what misconceptions are impeding us, and what further verities of life and art await us in them."—Stanley Kauffmann $30.00

Patron Saints

Five Rebels Who Opened America to a New Art, 1928-1943

new in paper

Nicholas Fox Weber

This chronicle about the the lives and activities of five young art patrons who were instrumental in bringing modern painting, sculpture, and dance to America is "an absorbing book....An **edifying and even exhilarating avant-garde entertainment.**"—Sam Hunter, *New York Times Book Review* 75 illus. $17.00

To order call 1-800-YUP-READ

Yale University Press

P.O. Box 209040, New Haven, CT 06520

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the American Scholar

Published for
General Circulation
by
PHI BETA KAPPA

EDITORIAL BOARD

PETER BROWN
JOEL E. COHEN
WM. THEODORE DE BARY
RENÉE C. FOX
JOHN HOPE FRANKLIN
VARTAN GREGORIAN

WERNER GUNDERSHEIMER
NEIL HARRIS
PAUL McHUGH
JUDITH MARTIN
EDWARD ROTHSTEIN
EUGEN WEBER

JOSEPH EPSTEIN, *Editor*
CHARLES BLITZER, *Consulting Editor*
JEAN STIPICEVIC, *Managing Editor*
SANDRA COSTICH, *Associate Editor*
EDNA NWABUFO, *Suscription Manager*
LYNETTE EDWARDS, *Subscription Assistant*

Advertising Representative: CLAIRE ISELI, 2108 Kingshouse Road, Silver Spring, Maryland 20905. Telephone: 301-384-2440. *U.S.A. Newsstand Distribution:* EASTERN NEWS DISTRIBUTORS, INC., 250 West 55th Street, New York, New York 10019.

THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR® (ISSN 0003-0937), published quarterly since 1932 by the Phi Beta Kappa Society, 1811 Q Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009. For subscription information call 202-265-3808. Second-class postage paid at Washington, D.C., and at additional mailing offices. Copyright © 1996 by the Phi Beta Kappa Society. Printed in the U.S.A.

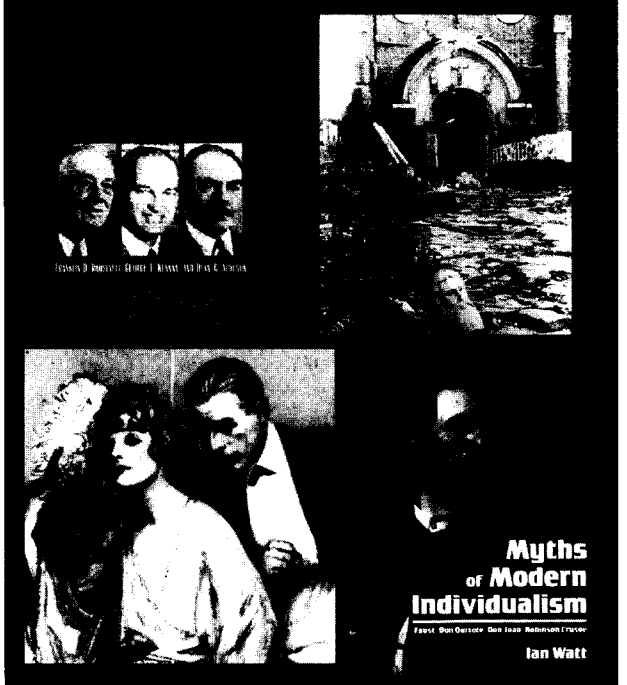
POSTMASTER: Send all change of address notices, undeliverable copies, subscription orders, and other mail to THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, 1811 Q Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

Subscription rates: for individuals, $25.00 one year, $48.00 two years, $69.00 three years, $6.95 a copy; for institutions, $30.00 one year, $58.00 two years, $84.00 three years, $8.00 a copy; foreign and Canadian, $3.00 a year additional for postage.

Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by return postage. No responsibility is assumed for their loss or injury. The opinions expressed in THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR are those of the author of each article and not necessarily those of the Editor, the Editorial Board, or the officers of the Phi Beta Kappa Society.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NEW FROM CAMBRIDGE



Myths of Modern Individualism

Faust, Don Quixote, Don Juan, Robinson Crusoe

Ian Watt

"...as original a work as Watt's famous first book, The Rise of the Novel. *It is a work of great maturity, testimony to the intelligence and civility of its author."*
– Frank Kermode

48011-6 Hardback $27.95

This Side of Paradise

F. Scott Fitzgerald

James L.W. West III, Editor

This Side of Paradise made Fitzgerald simultaneously famous for the stylish exuberance of his writing and infamous for the errors that peppered his text. This new edition provides an accurate, fully annotated text based on Fitzgerald's original manuscript.

The Cambridge Edition of the Works of F. Scott Fitzgerald

40234-4 Hardback $34.95

Ceremonies of Possession in Europe's Conquest of the New World, 1492-1640

Patricia Seed

Developing historical cultural contexts and tackling the implications for contemporary nation-states, this work explores the array of ceremonies that the Europeans performed to enact their taking possession of the New World.

49748-5 Hardback $49.95
49757-4 Paperback $14.95

Hiroshima in History and Memory

Michael J. Hogan, Editor

Prominent historians survey the Hiroshima story, from the American decision to drop the bomb to the recent controversy over the Enola Gay exhibit.

Contributors: Michael J. Hogan, J. Samuel Walker, Barton J. Bernstein, Herbert P. Bix, John W. Dower, Paul Boyer, Seiitsu Tachibana

56206-6 Hardback $54.95
56682-7 Paperback $17.95

Now in paperback...

Winner of the Robert H. Ferrell Prize of the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations

American Visions of Europe

Franklin D. Roosevelt, George F. Kennan, and Dean G. Acheson

John Lamberton Harper

56628-2 Paperback $16.95

Available in bookstores or from

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211.
Call toll-free 800-872-7423.
Web site: http://www.cup.org
MasterCard/VISA accepted. Prices subject to change.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CONTENTS

A Real Page-Turner
Aristides 167

Losing the Thread in Japan
Milton Ezrati 177

Is Music Unspeakable?
Jacques Barzun 193

What Should We Ask About Intelligence?
Robert J. Sternberg 205

An Earring for Erring: Robert Frost and Kay Morrison
Jeffrey Meyers 219

The New Cavafy: Unfinished Poems 1918–1932
G. W. Bowersock 243

Album of Bullet Holes
Stanley Kauffmann 259

Jane Eyre: The Tale of the Governess
Millicent Bell 263

Is God Really Dead in Beverly Hills?
Religion and the Movies
Stanley Rothman 272

The White Woods
Michelle Bobier 279

POETRY

A Motion We Cannot See
David Mason 203

Darken Ship
Michael Spence 218

Workshop
Rhina P. Espaillat 242

Instructions for Composing a Haiku
David Starkey 258

A Rose Is a Rose Is a Rose
Jack Myers 270

BOOKS

Margaret Fuller: The American Mind Writ Large
Tess Lewis 284

Reviews
Sonya Rudikoff, Michael Burns, Clarence Brown, Arthur J. Weitzman, Jim Holt, Damon Linker, Peter Dailey 292

THE READER REPLIES 319

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WILLIS BARNSTONE

The Secret Reader

501 Sonnets

In a voice at once luminous and brooding, humorous and grave, Willis Barnstone offers an amazing sonnet sequence on his double life and distinguished career—as a scholar and an artist.

I am captivated by these sonnets. The free movement of consciousness, the mind operating in the universe, are here the expression of a mature, hugely ranging person, giving these sonnets a poignancy and wisdom not normally seen. There is art and cunning, form, ruthless honesty, and it is not self-serving. —GERALD STERN

An amazingly original and profound poet offers a sequence that draws you like good fiction . . . The eagerness, love, and metaphysical tension to join and recognize impossible solitude go through the histories. —RUTH STONE

A valuable accomplishment, worthy of Borges who acts here as Barnstone's 'master.' These five histories build up into a remarkable modernist testament. —EDWARD HIRSCH

Four of the best things in America are Walt Whitman's *Leaves*, Herman Melville's Whale, the sonnets of Barnstone's *Secret Reader*, and my daily Corn Flakes—that rough poetry of morning.
—JORGE LUIS BORGES

"Suggesting here that formalistic poems 'dance in chains' they try to slip, Barnstone tests sonnet structures as he uses them . . . This prodigious effort offers rewards to grazers and those who read the sonnets in order." —*Publishers Weekly*

440 pages. 6 drawings. 0-87451-660-9. In paperback, $21.95

UNIVERSITY PRESS OF **New England**

Hanover, NH 03755-2048 • 800-421-1561 • http://www.dartmouth.edu/acad-inst/upne

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Real Page-Turner

ARISTIDES

. . . be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh.
—Ecclesiastes, 12:12

In what is said to be the shortest book review on record, Ambrose Bierce once wrote: "The covers of this book are too far apart." I have not been able to discover the title of the book that occasioned this model of concise criticism, though I myself have read books of fewer than two hundred pages to which the same criticism nicely applies. Actually, had they been between covers, I have known reviews, office memos, sonnets, notes to milkmen to which it would also apply. Bierce, it turns out, may not have been the perfect author for that review. Near the end of his life, he allowed a friend named Walter Neale to persuade him to bring out twelve bloated volumes of *The Collected Writings of Ambrose Bierce.* Talk about covers being too far apart!

Lengthy books are not everyone's notion of a good time. They become less so, I fear, as one grows older and hears the clock ticking all too obstreperously in the background. Still, if one is committed to the reading life, if one has decided to think of oneself as a cultivated person, then there are certain lengthy books that one ought to have read. Notable among these multi-volume works are Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past,* Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, The Memoirs of the Duc de Saint-Simon,* Macaulay's *History of England,* Frazier's *Golden Bough.* . . . But I had better stop here, for I see that, of the five works I have mentioned, the latter two I have failed to read, at least in their entirety.

The Macaulay is a depressing case in point. I acquired a five-volume set of *The History of England* in 1962 in a used-book shop on Fourth Avenue in New York. I cannot recall the price, but my guess is that it was less than fifteen dollars. When, not long afterward, I left New York, having sold my small library to save the expense of transporting it, this set of Macaulay was among the twenty or so books I chose not to sell. I later supplemented it with the two-volume *Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay* by Macaulay's nephew G. Otto Trevelyan. The seven volumes have since lived with me in two houses and five different apartments. I made one mad rush at reading *The History of England*—and brilliant stuff it seemed, too—but I was put off by the press of other work before completing even the first volume and never returned to it. Only the other day, in an activity I don't generally go in for called facing reality, I sent the five volumes off to a younger friend. Let them, I decided, sit in his house unread for thirty or more years. Having them out of my own apartment, at least I won't, as Ozymandias says in rather a different context, have to "look on [these] works . . . and despair."

About a shortage of despair on this count, I need never worry, for other multi-volume works in my possession that have for years gone unread pop up all over the joint. Sharing the intimacy of my bedroom, there is H. A. Taine's *History of English Literature* in four volumes, which I purchased many moons ago because I read that Taine was an important influence on Edmund Wilson. He has exerted no influence whatsoever on me, since I have

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

never cracked its covers (a previous owner cut the pages). Five small, green and blue volumes of *Makers and Finders*, Van Wyck Brooks's history of American literature, sit in the upper corner of a bookcase that is itself in the corner of my living room. I have read in these volumes from time to time, but the books' cleanliness shows their obvious disuse over the decades. I am missing three of the six volumes of Elie Halévy's *History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century*, which I must make a mental note to begin reading once I acquire those three missing vols, though not a moment before. I own a boxed, three-volume set of *The Muqaddimah* of Ibn Khaldun (whom A. J. Liebling used to quote to such amusing effect), which, as the punch line from an off-color joke I heard more than forty years ago had it, "ain't even been out of the box yet."

In a hallway bookcase sit sixteen volumes of *The Works of William James*, like a New England virgin, which is to say, practically untouched; Jane Austen's six slender novels fill out the rest of the space on that particular shelf; those at least have been read. In the same bookcase is the six-volume George Birkbeck Hill edition of Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, which I really do hope to read through one more time before my shot clock is used up. About the thirteen-volume *Cambridge Modern History*, squatting on the lower shelf of this bookcase, let us not speak.

I am talking here about tomes. A tome is, technically, a volume forming part of a larger work, or a large or scholarly book. I myself think of a tome purely in terms of heft, and a book doesn't have to be scholarly to qualify. Tome-dom sets in, in my opinion, somewhere around five hundred and fifty pages. The first tome I can remember reading is James Jones's best-seller *From Here to Eternity* (1951), which I devoured in high school in its closely printed 860 paperback pages. I read *From Here to Eternity* straight through, at no point slowed by a critical sense, an interest in style, or a concern about what I (not yet thinking myself a writer) could steal from it for my own purposes. Pure pleasure, it was the literary equivalent of wolfing down a box of chocolates, all with nougat centers. When it was over, I was a bit sated, a bit sad, but otherwise a perfectly satisfied customer.

The first serious tome I read was John Dos Passos's trilogy *U.S.A.* The three novels comprising that work run to 414, 473, and 561 pages, respectively, and I was so swept away by them that I shouldn't have minded a fourth. I read the trilogy in its Modern Library Giant edition, with rather proletarianized drawings by Reginald Marsh. Even now I can remember many of the details surrounding my reading of that book. I was eighteen; it was a hot summer; I took it to a nearby park called Indian Boundary, and day after day, sitting on the grass, I read it. This was the first book that I felt, even as I was reading it, had a powerful influence on me. It inflamed me with the idea of social justice; it formed and set my political viewpoint for the next twenty years of my life.

The odd thing about this, I suppose, is that by the time I read it, John Dos Passos's politics had radically changed. What hadn't changed was his decency as a human being. At thirty-three, I had the notion of writing Dos Passos's biography. I sent him some things I had published and asked if he would be willing to cooperate with me in writing his biography. He wrote back, working on an obviously aged typewriter, saying that he wouldn't mind my writing such a book, so long as I agreed to "put the liberal ideology in mothballs," promised never again to use the word "explicate," and understood that he wouldn't have all that much time to give me since he had a lot of work to get done while he still retained "a few of his marbles."

I took a publisher's advance for the book. Dos Passos and I exchanged a few more letters, and then, not long thereafter, he died. I am glad I never wrote the book. The fashion for great thick biographies had begun not long before with Mark Schorer's life of Sinclair Lewis, and my guess is that I probably would have turned out a book of similar tonnage, for Dos Passos had a long and full life. When I began to plan my Dos Passos biography, I established a folder for each year of my subject's life; there were seventy-four of them. The world is no worse off for my not having written such a book; and so, probably, is the reputation of John Dos Passos. I returned the publisher's advance.

Big biographies have become a problem for me, whose belief in the finitude of time becomes ever more pressing. Theoretically, one could write a biography of a man or woman that is quite as long as his or her life—and maybe a bit longer, since there is the after-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"This is one of the small handful of truly great anthologies....

McConkey is a modern Proust, and this book is a collective remembrance of things past. Here is a world of particular individual voices, each one saying, in a fresh and different way, 'we are what we were.'"
—ROBERT D. RICHARDSON, JR.

"It's altogether fitting that the author of *Court of Memory* and one of our best novelists, James McConkey, should have put together this invaluable anthology of writers remembering and writing about memory. From St. Augustine, with whom the 'anatomy' begins and ends, to Proust, Nabokov, James Agee and many others from this century, the anthology is never less than fascinating."
—WILLIAM H. PRITCHARD

$30.00, 528 pp.

The Anatomy of Memory

AN ANTHOLOGY • EDITED BY JAMES McCONKEY

"Seldes was one of the nation's foremost cultural commentators

during the second third of the twentieth century. With typical verve and insight, Michael Kammen uses his career to examine the major developments in twentieth-century popular culture. The result is a fascinating biography of Seldes and an illuminating exercise in cultural criticism."
—DAVID E. SHI

"Kammen's richly detailed, perceptive, and sensitive study has much to teach us about our century, our culture, and ourselves."
—LAWRENCE W. LEVINE

"Once again the author of *People of Paradox* writes a lively narrative of efforts to reconcile opposing tendencies in American cultural life."
—DAVID LEVIN

$35.00, 495 pp.

The Lively Arts

GILBERT SELDES AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF CULTURAL CRITICISM IN THE UNITED STATES
MICHAEL KAMMEN

At better bookstores • 1-800-451-7556 (M-F, 9-5 EST) • OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS • www.oup-usa.org

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

math to be dealt with. Some lives really do seem to support multi-volume effort. When I read Jacques Barzun's elegantly lucid two-volume *Berlioz*, I did not feel it in the least too lengthy. I had no complaints, either, about Leon Edel's full-fathom five vols on Henry James, and later I even read the excellent single-volume abridgment of that work, but then I am a sucker for Henry James.

More recently, however, I found I could not get through Brian Boyd's two-volume biography of Vladimir Nabokov, though it is clearly written and I have genuine curiosity about Nabokov's life. I have read only one of the four thus-far-published volumes of Joseph Frank's biography of Dostoyevsky; it is superior stuff, and I tell myself that I should like to read through the whole thing but wonder if I ever really shall. I have already decided to take a pass on David McCullough's 1,117-page biography of Harry Truman. As for Robert Caro's multi-volume, still-in-the-works biography of Lyndon Johnson, I tap my knuckles on the table and mutter, as at the poker table, "By me."

Another part of my difficulty with long biographies is that I have come to have genuine doubts about biographical truth. I am not sure I believe that any outsider can really get inside the life of another person, at least in a persuasive way. I know I carry around too many secrets of my own for anyone to have a chance to discover them, let alone their crucial pattern, which I myself haven't quite figured out. As for autobiography, I continue to read and be amused by it, but increasingly for its lies, evasions, and elaborate self-duplicities.

In biography, longer does not necessarily mean more penetrating. Recently in the *Times Literary Supplement* the reviewer of an 874-page biography of the economist Alfred Marshall, after citing John Maynard Keynes's brilliant essay on Marshall, reports: "What Keynes says in seventy pages, Professor Groenewegen says in 700. It has taken him ten years to write. It is full of interesting detail, exhaustive in its research and exhausting to read, sensible and sensitive in its judgments. It could have been better done, but having been done is unlikely to be superseded." In other words, it seems to me, the reviewer is all but saying that they should have saved the trees.

One of the services of criticism is to tell a normally busy person what not to read. I recall, roughly three decades ago, Edmund Wilson performing that important service for me when he put down, with a thump, Carl Sandburg's more than 4,500-page, six-volume biography of Abraham Lincoln. Wilson not only found it coarse, sentimental, and vulgar, but added that "there are moments when one is tempted to feel that the cruelest thing that has happened to Lincoln since he was shot by Booth has been to fall into the hands of Carl Sandburg." Before reading Wilson, I felt a slightly guilty tug whenever I saw one or more of Sandburg's volumes in someone's house or in a used-book store. Not anymore. What a gift Wilson bestowed upon me—no fewer, by my rough calculations, than three months of my reading life.

I no longer require Wilson's, or anyone else's, authoritative judgments in such matters. In recent months, a more than 1,200-page biography of James Thurber has been published, as has the first of two large volumes devoted to Tennessee Williams. More than 1,200 pages for Thurber, two volumes for Tennessee Williams? Where does that leave biographers of Beethoven, Rembrandt, and Dickens? It leaves me saying, "Thank you very much all the same." Shorter, in biography, may be better, forcing the biographer into greater efforts at finding the essence of his subject.

Sorry to mention all these page totals, but I am someone who cannot begin any book without first checking the number of its final page. I know people who never do this, who just read blithely away, heedless of how far they have to travel, and I envy them. I seem to be one of those people who are on some unwritten schedule. To go where and to do what has never been quite clear. Perhaps I want to know the number of pages in the book I am reading so that I shall have some idea of when I can begin the next book that I want to read.

Many of the tome-ish books of my youth were available, like *U.S.A.*, in Modern Library Giants. These books were as wonderfully inexpensive—my memory has them costing $2.45—and conveniently available as they were ugly and difficult because of their small, cramped print to read. Sometimes they included a writer's entire oeuvre—as in the case of Lewis Carroll or Charles Lamb—and sometimes they were devoted to a single great book. I read *Moby-Dick* and *Anna Karenina* in Modern

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Library Giants. The very name "Giant" gave a book imprimatur and gravity. In those days, many still-living writers were in the Modern Library—Faulkner, Malraux, Gide—but to have one's works buried in the box of a Modern Library Giant you had to be dead: a tome for a tomb. Being a Modern Library Giant seemed to me easily worth the price of death.

Apart from *Anna Karenina*, most of the Russian novels I read were in Penguin editions. This was when Penguins still had elegant plain covers, with differently colored borders for the different national literatures: in my memory, green for French, orange for English, red for Russian, purple for Latin. All Russian novels—those of Gogol and Chekhov excepted—seemed tome-ish, but who cared? Henry James called these books "baggy monsters"—as opposed, one gathers, to his own well-tailored monsters—yet all I remember, as I worked my way through Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy, was feeling an immense affinity for a world I would never know but to which I felt marvelously drawn. To this day, whisper the words *troika*, *steppe*, or *Nevsky Prospect* in my ear, and I will follow you anywhere.

I hope to have yet one more go-round with the great Russian novels. My heart lit up some years ago when the late Alexander Gerschenkron, the economic historian at Harvard, noted that he had read *War and Peace* fully fifteen times, and on no occasion did he "fail to discover something new in this inexhaustible store of observations, insights, ideas, and images that the previous readings have failed to reveal. . . . A book like this is rereadable *senz' altro*, and at least twice I began rereading *War and Peace* at once, starting again after having read the last page." I have read *War and Peace* only once; but if someone told me that I wouldn't be able to read it again, I should be profoundly sad.

Just before his death, my friend Erich Heller went into the hospital with a volume from Thomas Mann's tetralogy, *Joseph and His Brothers*, a work I shouldn't have been surprised to learn he may have read ten or fifteen times. My English one-volume edition runs to 1,207 pages. It is the only novel of Thomas Mann's I haven't read, and it occurs to me that I'd better get around to doing so. I also haven't read Ford Madox Ford's *Parade's End*, a work of 836 pages, slender for a tetralogy. I have read all twelve books of Anthony Powell's sequence of novels, *A Dance to the Music of Time*, and I read them at a more leisurely pace than I can recollect reading any other novels. Perhaps this was owing to the lack of any urgency in the plots of the books. So amusing were Powell's narrator's generalizations and the rich comedy of his characters that one scarcely cares what happens to any of them, so long as they return from time to time, which, decent chaps, they generally do.

I own the three volumes of Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago*, but I've read—and was quite blown away by—only the first. Magnificent as the first volume is, I suspect that I may never return to read the other two because of my increased nervousness about reading large quantities on the subject of human cruelty. In the early 1960s, I did a lot of reading about the Holocaust, and I now shy away from this subject, too, telling myself that the enormity of it is more than my mind can accommodate. I have read somewhere that people who immerse themselves in the literature about the Holocaust emerge prone to suicide, which seems perfectly believable to me.

I devoted a good part of this past summer to reading a work of triple-tome weight, Robert Musil's *The Man Without Qualities*, which has long had the status of an unfinished classic. Brilliant though long stretches of it are, I finally found it more unfinished—and hence disappointing—than classic. But perhaps, à la Dr. Strangelove, I ought to learn to stop worrying and enjoy the longueurs, at least if I plan to continue reading books of such girth (*The Man Without Qualities* is nearly 1,800 pages in two volumes). I read the first two volumes of Naguib Mahfouz's *Cairo Trilogy* but have let so much time elapse that I have all but forgotten the characters, who, I trust, reappear in the final volume. Why didn't I read the third volume straightaway? I can't recall, but, clearly, as a once-popular song has it, it's too late baby now, it's too late.

I have read only one of the novels—*The Masters*—in C. P. Snow's *Strangers and Brothers* sequence, and though I admired it at the time, I feel no need to read the others. I have never read a word of *The Forsyte Saga* and, in a way I cannot quite explain, feel I am missing something by not having done so. I have not read all the novels that comprise Balzac's *Comédie humaine*, and only a few of the novels in Zola's *Les Rougon-Macquart* series. I have

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

read *Remembrance of Things Past* twice, in two different English translations, and would like to spin through this book just once more.

Of all the various gaps in my reading of thickish books, the largest, easily, is the Bible. I have of course read *in* the Bible, but I have never read *through* the Bible. On a few occasions, I have made a charge at it; once I fell back when they began the begats. Other times I have read separate books—Genesis, Exodus, Psalms—and the Gospels. I have discovered that the Bible is not easy to read if one doesn't go at it, so to say, religiously. I was once asked if I wished to contribute to a book on the Old Testament in which various writers were asked to write on their favorite biblical book. The fee was $1,500. I declined. Had there been a book of Pharisees, I might have accepted.

This lacuna in my reading is serious even apart from the saving of my blasted soul. As a literary man, I should be sufficiently aware of the Bible, Old Testament and New, to be able to pick up many of the allusions with which the English and American literatures of previous centuries are rife. I take cold comfort here from the fact that most people I have asked—literary men and women chief among them—have also admitted to not having read the Bible straight through. I wonder if Justice Holmes read through the Bible. He is on record as suffering under the nagging feeling that he had to finish every book he began. He was worried, he used to say, that Saint Peter would ask him if he had read certain books, and not wanting to be caught telling half- or quarter-truths, he refused ever to quit or even to skim through a book, a rule he never broke until the age of seventy-five, when he finally began to ease up on himself.

As I round the turn heading toward sixty, it occurs to me that I ought to read those key books I haven't read, re-read those I read badly because I was too young, and re-read again those books that I cannot bear the thought of having read for the last time. Inevitably, these tend to be preponderantly thick books. I would like another shot at *Moby-Dick*. Maybe I ought to re-read *Tom Jones*, which, on my last reading, at twenty, I remember lapping up with sheer pleasure. I'd like another go at certain novels by Dickens. I've not read anywhere near enough Trollope. Alexander Herzen's *My Past and Thoughts* is a book I read too quickly the first time around, having agreed to write for a newspaper 1,500 words about its perhaps three-quarters of a million. Another binge of Balzac is a treat I feel I owe myself. (This one's for you, little guy.) *Don Quixote* is a stout volume I wish to revisit—Rosinante, to the road again! Alas, I remember few of its details, only a permanent blur of delight.

At the University of Chicago in my day, English majors were presented with a junior- and senior-year reading list of important books—not offered in regular courses—on which they were tested. The list, as I remember it, was a brilliant compilation of precisely those books—tomes, a vast number of them—that, if one was normally lazy, one would most certainly avoid reading: Samuel Richardson, Hobbes's *Leviathan*, lots of John Locke, *Paradise Regained* (of *Paradise Lost* Samuel Johnson rightly said that no one ever wished it longer; of *Paradise Regained*, he might have added that no one ever wished it existed). A friend recalls during this period finding me in my pajamas, unshaven, books all over my bed, a little uncertain about what time of day it was or what country I was in. I recall staggering my way through this load, reading every book on the list, but drawing a thick line at *The Faerie Queene*. I couldn't read the bloody *Faerie Queene*. I decided to bet against the test including any questions about Spenser's horrendously long (as it seemed to me then) poem—and, Hallelujah! I won. I haven't read it yet. Moreover, I have no intention of reading it. You don't suppose, do you, that it's on Saint Peter's list?

I re-read Montaigne's *Essays* only a few years ago, in M. A. Screech's new translation, and I can't imagine not peeking back into it from time to time, though I'll probably never read it straight through again. I read Montaigne chiefly in the early morning hours, between five and six-thirty, generally with my cat on my lap, taking notes on pertinent passages, of which there are a plethora. Fat books present physical problems. They are not easily manipulated. One hesitates to travel with them, because they weigh one down and cause one's luggage to bulge. Nor does it seem appropriate to carry them out on an errand—to the bank or post office, for example—where one might, while standing in line, have a chance to read a page or two, because they make one seem too much the bookworm. Better, for this

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CELEBRATING NATIONAL POETRY MONTH
CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF PUBLISHING POETRY

Michael Anania *Riversongs* ✻ Jim Barnes *American Book of the Dead* ✻ Jim Barnes *The Sawdust War* ✻ Stephen Berg *In It* ✻ Stephen Berg *Oblivion* ✻ Stephen Berg *With Akhmatova at the Black Gates* ✻ Michael Borich *The Black Hawk Songs* ✻ J. Edward Chamberlin *Come Back to Me My Language* ✻ Philip D. Church *Furnace Harbor* ✻ Nicholas Coles and Peter Oresick *For a Living* ✻ Mark Doty *My Alexandria* ✻ Martin Edmunds *The High Road to Taos* ✻ Lynn Emanuel *The Dig and Hotel Fiesta* ✻ Roland Flint *Stubborn* ✻ Eino Friberg *The Kalevala* ✻ Alice Fulton *Palladium* ✻ Brendan James Galvin *Great Blue* ✻ Jean Garrigue *Selected Poems* ✻ Reginald Gibbons and Terrence Des Pres *Thomas McGrath* ✻ Lorna Goodison *To Us, All Flowers Are Roses* ✻ Debora Greger *Off-Season at the Edge of the World* ✻ Michael S. Harper *Dear John, Dear Coltrane* ✻ Michael S. Harper *Healing Song for the Inner Ear* ✻ Michael S. Harper *Nightmare Begins Responsibility* ✻ Michael S. Harper *Images of Kin* ✻ Michael S. Harper *Honorable Amendments* ✻ T. R. Hummer *Lower-Class Heresy* ✻ T. R. Hummer *The Passion of the Right-Angled Man* ✻ Barbara Helfgott Hyett *The Double Reckoning of Christopher Columbus, 3 August-12 October 1492* ✻ Don Johnson *Hummers, Knucklers, and Slow Curves* ✻ John Knoepfle *poems from the sangamon* ✻ Sydney Lea *Searching the Drowned Man* ✻ Isaac Jack Lévy *And the World Stood Silent* ✻ Laurence Lieberman *New and Selected Poems, 1962-92* ✻ Leatrice H. Lifshitz *Her Soul beneath the Bone* ✻ Nathaniel Mackey *Eroding Witness* ✻ S. J. Marks *Something Grazes Our Hair* ✻ Edgar Lee Masters *Spoon River Anthology* ✻ Sandra McPherson *The God of Indeterminacy* ✻ Josephine Miles *Coming to Terms* ✻ Frederick Morgan *Northbook* ✻ Frederick Morgan *Poems* ✻ Frederick Morgan *Poems of the Two Worlds* ✻ Sylvia Moss *Cities in Motion* ✻ Laura Mullen *The Surface* ✻ G. E. Murray *Walking the Blind Dog* ✻ Peter Oresick and Nicholas Coles *Working Classics* ✻ Len Roberts *Counting the Black Angels* ✻ Edwin Rolfe *Collected Poems* ✻ Edwin Rolfe *Trees Became Torches* ✻ Carl Sandburg *Fables, Foibles, and Foobles* ✻ Carl Sandburg *Chicago Poems* ✻ Peter Serchuk *Waiting for Poppa at the Smithtown Diner* ✻ Norman R. Shapiro *The Fabulists French* ✻ Joan R. Sherman *African-American Poetry of the Nineteenth Century* ✻ Dave Smith *Dream Flights* ✻ Dave Smith *Goshawk, Antelope* ✻ Samn Stockwell *Theater of Animals* ✻ Shinkichi Takahashi *Triumph of the Sparrow* ✻ Dennis Tedlock *Days from a Dream Almanac* ✻ Milton Teichman and Sharon Leder *Truth and Lamentation* ✻ Virginia R. Terris *Tracking* ✻ Michael Van Walleghen *Blue Tango* ✻ Michael Van Walleghen *More Trouble with the Obvious* ✻ Michael Van Walleghan *The Wichita Poems* ✻ James Whitehead *Local Men* and *Domains* ✻ Miller Williams *Points of Departure* ✻ Robert Wrigley *What My Father Believed* ✻ Paul Zimmer *The Great Bird of Love* ✻ . . . all currently available, with more to come.

Illinois 25

800-545-4703 • UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS PRESS • 1325 South Oak Street • Champaign, IL 61820 • http://www.uiuc.edu/providers/uipress

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

purpose, to tote one of the six-by-four-inch Oxford World Classics volumes, though the fear here is that these little dark blue books might make people think one is studying for the ministry.

I admire people who have had the stamina and patience to write lengthy books—admire them, that is, without much wishing to emulate them. Apart from various collections of essays, literary criticisms, and stories, I have written only two full-length books—one of 318 pages, the other of 312—and I haven't much desire to write another. In the middle of writing a long book, I find myself generally at sea, confused about direction; I put a fresh piece of paper in the typewriter and type some number like 273 at its top, certain that it's too late to turn back. At the end of writing a long book, my paramount emotion has been a combination of relief and regret, brought on by the feeling that I know how the book *ought* to have been written and I would do so if only there were time to write it all over again, but there isn't.

I came close to writing a genuine tome on the subject of snobbery. It set out to be a general discussion of the phenomenon of snobbery—its psychology, mechanics, social import, and the rest—but it very quickly began to grow into a history of the subject. What soon bloated the book was my decision to produce a snob's gallery of many of the famous snobs in history. History's snobs, I came to realize, have not been few; going on in this line, an immense volume would result. I found I hadn't the *sitzfleisch*, the sheer sitting power, for the job. Another publisher's advance was returned.

Sitzfleisch is required not only to write but to read thick books. Historically, this capacity may be undergoing change. Sainte-Beuve, as a young man, read the *Nouvelle Héloïse* in a day. In *The Razor's Edge*, Somerset Maugham has his protagonist, sitting in an English club, not move out of his chair until, again in the course of a single day, he had read through William James's *Principles of Psychology*. This shows powerful concentration, *sitzfleisch*, the real thing. A friend who teaches Russian novels to undergraduates tells me that, in the current day, one cannot expect students to read more than two hundred pages a week for one of the four courses they are taking. The national attention span has diminished.

In more recent times, I have heard it said that the formula for a certain kind of booming best-seller includes writing it to a length that allows readers to get through it in a single sitting. *Jaws*, *Love Story*, *The Bridges of Madison County* are a few titles that seem to bear this out. Those particular books are not much to my taste, but the notion of a slender book is increasingly becoming so, even though I am almost never able to read anything in a single sitting. I prefer the weight in my hand of a book of learned yet elegant lectures published by, say, the Clarendon Press, or a volume of verse designed by Harry Ford at Knopf. *Watermark*, Joseph Brodsky's little book on Venice, approximates my ideal; most of Max Beerbohm's books realize it.

I have of late been reading a charming book titled *Why I Have Not Written Any of My Books* by Marcel Bénabou, which is its author's explanation for his impressive infecundity over the years; it is a book of the quite perfect length of 111 pages. I not long ago thought of reviving my notion of writing a book on snobbery, but with the new title of *The Little Book on Snobbery*, a title that would force me not to go beyond 200 pages. I wonder if I shouldn't put in a call to Random House to see if there is any interest in a new series of books, over which I would serve as general editor, to be called Modern Library Pygmies.

And yet, despite this new penchant for brief books, I find that the writers I most love have been hugely productive. My pantheon of writers, all of whom combine exceptional energy with exceptional talent, includes Samuel Johnson, Edward Gibbon, Marcel Proust, and Henry James. What unites them is that all were beings organized for literature. (I also have a genuine weakness for Winston Churchill, though I would rather read about him than actually read him; and I fully expect to leave the planet without ever having stuck my nose into the four volumes of his *History of the English-Speaking Peoples* or the six volumes of *The Second World War*.) None of these men exactly worked in miniature, and two of them, Gibbon and Proust, devoted the major intellectual and artistic efforts of their careers to solitary if voluminous works. Not only do I never tire of reading these men, but everything about them interests me. Their writing and their lives give me an enhanced sense of human possibility.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

As the literary equivalent of a bulimic, without the throwing up part, I have lately been bingeing myself on Gibbon, reading him and reading about him; and, I must report, the older I get, the more my admiration for the little fat boy grows. I say little fat boy because I can never think of Gibbon apart from his physique—five feet tall, and more than two hundred pounds. In a silhouette of him cut by a contemporary named Mrs. Brown, he has a body resembling nothing so much as a figurine: an enameled little man with an enameled prose style. "Fat and ill-constructed," wrote Fanny Burney, "Mr. Gibbon has cheeks of such prodigious chubbiness that they envelop his nose so completely as to render it in profile almost invisible." Now there is a detail that sets a face, permanently, in concrete.

Reading Edward Gibbon one feels one is looking on as an immensely bright and imaginative boy is playing the world's most astonishing game of toy soldiers, only he is using real soldiers, also emperors, popes, barbarians, eunuchs, sultans, emirs, and other key pieces that he moves around the board more brilliantly than anyone had ever done before or has done since. I also think of Gibbon as one of a very small number of human beings who seem to have accomplished in life exactly what they set out to do. Macaulay, who is said to have wished his history to have a place on the bed table of every educated woman in England, which it soon did, is another. Gibbon, whose book "was on every table and almost every toilette," topped Macaulay in earning the praise of David Hume, which he claimed "overpaid the labour of ten years."

There is something invigorating about reading *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*—invigorating and inspiring—something that makes you believe, while you are reading it, that the panorama of life, in all its complication, has been mastered, at least intellectually. I am far from alone in feeling this. Winston Churchill, Lord Moran reports in his diaries, also felt it: "And when, as a subaltern in India, he began to read Gibbon, already he knew what he wanted to do in life"—which was to become a great orator and handler of words.

"Another damned thick, square book—always scribble, scribble, scribble!—eh, Mr. Gibbon?" said the Duke of Gloucester when, in 1781, the second two volumes of *The Decline and Fall* appeared. But a more definitive judgment has been that of Walter Bagehot, who wrote that "there is no more solid book in the world than Gibbon's history," adding that "if the Roman empire *had* written about itself, this was how it would have done so."

Edward Gibbon was what today we might call, in the poverty of our language, a "control freak." I should say that no one had a keener sense of his own limitations or demonstrated how impressively those could be stretched. "My unfitness to bodily exercise reconciled me to a sedentary life," Gibbon writes in *Memoirs of My Life.* Of his own finances, he notes: "I am persuaded that had I been more indigent or more wealthy, I should not have possessed the leisure or the perseverance to prepare and execute my voluminous history." Later in his memoirs, he notes, accurately, that "few works of merit and importance have been executed either in a garret or a palace," and, besides, he himself had money "sufficient to support the rank of a gentleman, and to satisfy the desires of a philosopher." Even his incomparable prose style was formed by habits of control: "It has always been my practice to cast a long paragraph in a single mould, to try it by my ear, to deposit it in my memory, but to suspend the action of the pen till I had given the last polish to my work."

Gibbon knew, too, that his somewhat detached and mannered personal style was not to everyone's taste. Boswell detested him. Horace Walpole, while praising him to his face, mocked him behind his back. "I had not," Gibbon noted, "been endowed by art or nature with those happy gifts of confidence and address which unlock every door and every bosom." George Colman, who met both Samuel Johnson and Gibbon on the same memorable evening, when he was only fourteen, later remembered that "Johnson's style was grand, and Gibbon's elegant. . . . Johnson marched to kettledrums and trumpets; Gibbon moved to flutes and haut-boys."

The interior Gibbon was of course much more interesting than the exterior. What a plentifully vivid imagination he must have had, this man who could truthfully say "that I was never less alone than when by myself." He was greatly aided in his ambition by knowing early in life that he "aspired to the character of a historian," the only question being a historian of what. He considered writing a history of the liberty of the Swiss; he considered

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

writing the history of the Republic of Florence under the Medicis—what a book that would have been! It was on October 15, 1764, in Rome, "amidst the ruins of the Capitol while the barefoot fryars [of the Franciscan Order] were singing Vespers in the temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing the decline and fall of the city first started to my mind." Although it would take him nearly eight and a half years before he got down to the actual composition—a work that, when it was done, would comprise more than a million and a half words and eighteen thousand footnotes—the rest, it has perhaps never been more precisely said, is history.

Gibbon apparently talked with no other scholar when writing his great history. Neither did he leave disciples or found a school. He was intellectually isolated, spiritually alone, *sui generis*. One of nature's bachelors—as are most men given to producing vast, multivolume books—he withdrew from his one chance at marriage (to Suzanne Curchod, the future mother of Mme de Staël) when his father opposed the match: "I sighed as a lover," he notes in his memoirs, "I obeyed as a son." Yet he seems not to have felt anything like loneliness or regret and near the end of his days could remark, "When I contemplate the common lot of mortality, I must acknowledge that I have drawn a high prize in life's lottery."

But the prize, for those of us who have an unending taste for his polished periods, is ours. I find reading Gibbon has a calming effect on me. Under the spell of the confident cadence of his prose, I thrill to his lovely, lilting ironic generalizations. Superior athlete in prose that he was, Gibbon had every rhetorical move: startling phrasings, fine formulations, delicious rhythms, and, most pleasurable of all, flat-out subtle good sense: "But the power of instruction is seldom of much efficacy," he writes, apropos of Marcus Aurelius's attempt to educate his son Commodus, "except in those happy dispositions where it is almost superfluous."

Unsurpassed in historical writing are Gibbon's wonderfully economical accounts of the characters of the Roman emperors, from the Antonines—"possibly the only period in history in which the happiness of a great people was the sole object of government"—to Caracalla—the "common enemy of mankind" and a "disgrace to human nature"—with splendid sidebars for such as Gordianus's son, whose "twenty-two acknowledged concubines, and a library of sixty-two thousand volumes, attested the variety of his inclinations; and from the productions which he left behind him, it appears that the former as well as the latter were designed for use rather than for ostentation." Gibbon knew early in his history of the Roman Empire that, for a writer of his temperament—ironic, cool, detached—he was sitting on a mother lode: "The annals of the emperors," he wrote in his third chapter, "exhibit a strong and various picture of human nature, which we should vainly seek among the mixed and doubtful characters of modern history."

Gibbon thought himself the historian of Rome in her decline, but he is quite as justly thought to be among the best students of human nature, that most elusive of subjects. He was, it oughtn't to surprise anyone to learn, a persistent reader of novels. It is a shame that he was born too early to read the novels of James or Proust. Nor is there any evidence that they read him, which is also a shame. Maybe one can either write long books or read them, but not both.

I seem, in this essay, to be committing myself to do neither. Yet I have begun *The Decline and Fall* again; it is only my second time through. As I said, I'd like to read through Proust once more. Stop me before I begin *The Golden Bough*, though not if I begin (again) *The Golden Bowl*. Borges says somewhere that it is "tiresome and laborious folly . . . to write lengthy tomes, to expound in five hundred pages on an idea that one could easily propound orally in a few minutes. Better is pretending that the books exist already and offering a summary or commentary." Quite so—if you happen to be Borges.

The rest of us have no choice but just to keep on reading. Behind all this reading and re-reading, especially later in life, is the notion that we are smarter now, better able to plumb the depths and discover the secrets buried in wise books, better able to take them to heart and make superior use of them. I at any rate continue to operate under this no doubt illusory assumption. No one has ever said about anything I have written that it is, in the cant phrase of the day, a real page-turner, but in the end a real page-turner may be the best description of me yet.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Losing the Thread in Japan

MILTON EZRATI

THE TRAVELER FROM THE UNITED STATES is confronted, on even a brief visit to Japan these days, with a remarkable difference of opinion on that country and in its oft-celebrated "way." Americans, from the Clinton administration to the cabby on the way to the airport, continue to describe Japan as an unbeatable, almost frightening economic rival. While many Japanese once agreed with this characterization, recently they seem to have changed, lost confidence, become almost defeatist. It is as if last year's Kobe earthquake extended emotional aftershocks throughout the country, overthrowing a former sense of well-being and submerging the old spirit of success.

This loss of spirit results, of course, not from geological but from economic and social causes. Japan has had to face its first recession in a generation and unprecedented political upheaval. Coming to a culture virtually defined by uninterrupted growth and almost bland political stability, these setbacks have hit the Japanese hard. The shock of unexpected reverses understandably has injured Japan's self-image and confidence. But more, the recent setbacks also have forced painful adjustments on this society, geared as it was to continual, rapid growth. Against such a backdrop, events such as the earthquake, the nerve gas attack in Tokyo's subway, the shooting of a high police official, and the arrest of a one-time cabinet minister have taken on mammoth dimensions, adding significantly to the general anxiety.

Japan's sudden self-doubt resembles in some ways that of the United States during the 1970s, when failure in Vietnam and the ascent of OPEC shook a once-firm confidence and complacency. But for Japan the implications are more profound. The Japanese, more than most, draw their motivation from a shared sense of community purpose, a kind of national "team spirit," uncommon in the West, except, perhaps, in wartime. For the last fifty years or so, their confi-

✪ MILTON EZRATI, Chief Investment Officer for Nomura Capital Management, Inc., often travels to Japan and writes frequently on economic, financial, and public policy issues.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dence in belonging to a special Japanese "team" fostered the spirit of self-sacrifice, hard work, and attention to quality for which Japan grew famous and on which it built its economic miracle. The loss of that old team spirit threatens to destroy all these familiar qualities and much that goes with them.

A traveler, revisiting Japan after an absence of only a few months, cannot miss this shocking change from near arrogance to a kind of queasy self-doubt. Not long ago, the Japanese commonly referred to themselves as *tomaranai*, a word that literally means unstoppable and effectively means unbeatable. As always with the Japanese, it was used politely and with at least the appearance of personal humility. Nonetheless, the word exuded a seemingly unshakable confidence in themselves, their race, and their "way." Lately, the word has dropped from usage. The old confidence in success is gone. A recent survey conducted by the Japanese periodical *Nihon Keizai Shimbun* revealed that over half of Japan now expects the country to lose its status as the major economic power in Asia within less than ten years.

Even the Japanese government has a hard time presenting its usually calm, optimistic face. A recent report of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry spoke of Japan's need to "abandon existing economic policies, management styles and ideas about living standards, and embark upon structural reforms of historic magnitude." While this kind of self-evaluation is common in the West, it is strikingly rare in a Japanese government report and is indicative of change. It shocks the old Japan hands, who have grown accustomed to an almost smug official style that assured the West of the superiority of Japan's approach and offered it to developing Asia as an attractive alternative to Western capitalism. The earlier, stridently confident approach had grown so prevalent, in fact, that the *Economist* has written about it extensively, introducing it under the title "Japan's Nice New Nationalism." The official Japanese pose of offering a superior alternative remains, but the assurance suddenly has gone.

Young people, especially, seem to have fallen prey to the new, depressed spirit. According to corporate executives who deal with the hires right out of university, these new graduates are very unlike the ambitious, hard-working crop of earlier years and even of the late 1980s and early 1990s. Those earlier "rookies," as they are called, had all the characteristics typically associated with Japanese workers. They saw careers in working extraordinarily hard to advance their firm's and their country's interests in the global economy. Today's rookies seem intent only on guarding their positions. As one Japanese journalist put it, the "kids" are ready to "dig in" and hide under "stress reduction manuals." Less kind, Mr. Sakio Sakagawa, the president of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a major Tokyo training firm, described the new attitude as simply "small-minded." Certainly, the approach differs from the team spirit of the past and is light years from the rhetoric that accompanied it.

Words have gained new connotations under the sway of this changed attitude. Not long ago, the rapidly rising value of the yen—what the Japanese call *endaka*—represented an affirmation of national strength. At a 1992 conference, for example, the Japanese economist and investment consultant Nobumitsu Kagami could hardly suppress a smile of pride when he translated the word to a gathering of prominent Australian bankers, academics, and financiers. Now *endaka* evokes a sense of frustration and fear that the seemingly uncontrollable rise in the value of the yen will price Japanese business off world markets. Kagami now sounds a note of resignation when he refers to U.S. manipulation of *endaka* to oppress Japan. A recent survey by Japan's Economic Planning Agency also voices this new feeling. It reveals that nearly two-thirds of Japanese business sadly accepts as inevitable the loss of the nation's manufacturing base to low-wage countries overseas in what they call *kudoka*—literally the "hollowing out" of industry.

All the years of striving and sacrifice suddenly seem pointless. To many Japanese, almost fifty years of astonishing national effort yielded only a brief period of power and prestige in the 1980s before the ground slid out from under them. Guests at Japanese clubs once commonly heard members speculate on their next major move in Europe, America, or Southeast Asia. A lot of it was just bragging, but it nonetheless spoke to an expectation of continuous expansion and success. These days, an eavesdropper is more likely to hear executives muse sentimentally about old classmates who found greater happiness and meaning by going into the family business than did the fast-track types who went to study abroad, climb the corporate ladder, and lead Japan in trying to beat the West at its own game.

Yoshimitsu Matsuki, a prominent Japanese investor, revealed this new, defeatist attitude in a particularly poignant observation over coffee not long ago. Looking out from the restaurant at the facade of the main Takashimaya department store in the Nihonbashi financial district of Tokyo, he told how impressed he was by Takashimaya's new, bigger store in Singapore. The comparison reminded him of his trip to Paris in the 1970s, when, visiting the great stores of that city, he noted how old-fashioned they seemed and how slow and inefficient they were compared with stores in Japan. The new Singapore store, he said, is very efficient and active. He thinks of old-fashioned, inefficient Paris now when he returns to Tokyo from Singapore. "It is already passed for Japan," he reflected.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Takeo Nakamura's remarks put this new Japanese attitude into sharp focus. As he told it, when he was president of his firm's U.S. subsidiary, he enjoyed telling Americans how the Second World War taught Japan the uselessness of the military approach. In defeat, he claimed, Japan learned better than the victors that the answer to national success lay in an unswerving emphasis on business and economics. These days, he puts on a brave face for Western clients, but in private conversation his concerns clearly show that Japan, it seems, somehow got it wrong again.

Japanese self-doubt clearly has roots in the recent recession and the yen's steep rise against other currencies. But in themselves, these difficulties are simply not severe enough to offer a full explanation of the country's new defeatism. While the expensive yen might threaten to price Japanese products off world markets by making them uncompetitively expensive, it remains only a threat. To date, Japan retains an enviable foreign trade surplus. And Japan's recession, though rather long-lived, is simply too mild to crack the spirit of even the most sensitive of peoples. At its worst, the economic setback brought down Japan's real gross domestic product, or GDP (the total output of goods and services excluding the biasing effect of inflation), by only 1.5 percent, which is less than in the average U.S. recession of the past twenty years and only slightly worse than the American recession in the early 1990s. Japan's unemployment rate is barely above 3 percent of the labor force, compared with 5.5 percent in the U.S. and much more extreme figures in Europe. Rather than the immediate practical difficulties brought on by these setbacks, it is the historical context in which they have occurred that offers an explanation of Japan's loss of faith in itself and its "way."

Until this recent recession, Japan had enjoyed a remarkable period of economic success, unrivaled in the industrialized world and quite without interruption. According to Ministry of Finance statistics, during the twenty-five years before 1992, when this most recent recession began, Japan's real GDP grew at the stunningly rapid rate of 4.5 percent a year. The country suffered only five quarters in which the economy failed to grow and only one instance when a period of contraction extended beyond three months. And although the yen gained in price during this period against all major currencies and a whopping 60 percent against the U.S. dollar, Japanese exporters adjusted to keep foreign sales leading the economy's advance. By comparison, the United States during this time, despite its faster rate of population growth, increased its real GDP by only 2.7 percent a year and suffered nineteen quarters of contraction off and on, with the longest stretch of decline extending for almost a year.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Since Japan readily had taken its remarkable record as confirmation of the superiority of its approach, even its mild recession has prompted people to question all the practices on which the earlier success was based. New, intense foreign pressure on Japan to erase its huge trade surplus has redoubled such worries, as has Japan's need for the first time to face hard competition from the emerging Asian tigers: Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, even China.

Also because many Japanese practices understandably grew up around an assumption of endless, rapid growth, the death of that assumption has forced some wrenching adjustments on Japanese life. The complex and delicate web of Japan's distribution network, about which U.S. trade negotiators have complained for years, has begun to come unstrung, as has the much lauded Japanese system of lifetime employment. Even basic notions of wealth have shifted now that people no longer presume endless, rapid growth, and that has wreaked havoc on the country's financial system. Since many of these adjustments strike at hallmarks of the Japanese "way," they have generated additional anxiety by showing that many treasured practices were not, as so many had claimed, part of a unique and ancient culture but rather were simply the product of a long period of rapid growth.

When Japan was growing fast, it easily maintained its unusual and costly system for the distribution of goods and services. Unlike other nations, Japan's wholesalers and retailers avoided price competition. They engaged in a kind of wealth-sharing arrangement, in which they segmented the market into little monopolies at each stage of distribution from producer to the final consumer. Participants at each level took their cut and passed along the by-then high-priced product to the next stage. This structure kept foreign products out and cost the consumer dearly. But as long as the country's rapid growth persisted, people complained little. Everyone was getting rich so fast that it was easy to pay up, or, if it were not easy to pay today, growth would make it easy by tomorrow. The system also appealed to the strong Japanese sense of community. People knew that the high prices supported the small shops and the countless layers of the distribution network. That knowledge compensated them some for the expense by offering the valued feeling of having helped the Japanese commonweal find work for everyone.

As confidence in perpetually rapid growth ended, the Japanese consumer became less willing than before to pay the price for this system. Now that it is harder to pay up and people feel less certain about their future ability to afford the high prices, they have lost their enthusiasm for supporting the commonweal through high-cost ineffi-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ciency. For the first time, discounting has received a warm reception in Japan, and, as in Western countries years ago, it has begun to destroy the old ways.

The most significant inroads have occurred in the sale of rice, that most symbolic of commodities to Japan. In the last year alone, warehouses and storefronts have opened all over Tokyo and other cities, where discount artists have begun the very un-Japanese practice of selling both domestic and imported rice at cut prices. Their profit on each kilo runs well below the fat margins of the old system, but, as with discounters everywhere, the lures of lower prices have brought additional customers to enhance returns. Traditional stores have responded by discarding traditional ways. Supermarkets suddenly have introduced American-style, low-priced generic products, unheard of in Japan a year ago.

While this all has cut into the profits of traditional wholesalers and retailers, it has provided a boon to the Japanese consumer. The price of all food, not just rice, has dropped by some 15 percent in just the last year. One Japanese housewife in a Tokyo working-class district exclaimed how "rich" she felt, pointing out, almost conspiratorially, how generic soy sauce is now priced some 40 percent below Kikkomon, a once-staple brand. The discounter onslaught and price-cutting riposte have given the Japanese consumer a general break on the prices of other goods as well. It is hard to get an exact fix on this phenomena's effect throughout the whole retail area. But it is indicative that consumer prices during the past year have declined by almost 2 percent and wholesale prices by more.

Despite the gains to the consumer, the demise of the old system worries many people in Japan. Some fear that it will retard the economy's long-term growth prospects. The huge profits implicit in the old, cost-plus system, they argue, had facilitated the enormous capital spending for which Japan had grown famous and from which the country had created its strong growth record. Discounting dissolves those profits. Many government officials even worry about a decline in Japanese savings as low prices, "American style," tempt the consumer to ever greater volumes of spending. "Without these savings," points out Yoshio Suzuki, previously of the Bank of Japan, now of the Nomura Research Institute, "Japan will have a hard time financing future growth." Many Japanese also worry about the cultural side of the equation. The substitution of intense competition for the old wealth-sharing system, they worry, will steal from the Japanese the important feeling of belonging to a unified, supportive culture. That loss in turn, it is feared, will render society less cooperative and civilized than in the past.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The same sorts of dual economic and cultural concerns surround a parallel unraveling of the classically Japanese practice of lifetime employment. This widely known and often admired practice of never firing people or even laying them off was relatively easy to support when Japan was growing rapidly along a virtually uninterrupted path. It was, in fact, the only rational response, when that rapid growth had made it difficult for firms to get good staff, or any staff at all for that matter. During much of the past forty or more years, job markets in Japan were so tight that statisticians gave short shrift to the unemployment statistics watched so closely in the West. They developed a uniquely Japanese measure of comparing the number of job offerings with the number of job seekers. Through much of the country's long period of rapid growth, offerings usually exceeded seekers, sometimes by as much as 40 percent. Companies saw no gain in letting workers go, even during the brief economic slowdowns. History had taught them that the periods of bad business would pass quickly and that good workers would be scarce when business picked up again. Even near incompetence was better kept somewhere on the job when firing someone could mean going without needed help altogether.

But the recent recession has upset these kinds of calculations. When the economic downturn began, companies tried to adhere to the lifetime employment system. They resorted to their old practice of cutting bonuses (a big part of all workers' pay) and idling people on the job. Japan's Labor Ministry estimates that by now those unemployed on the job exceed those officially unemployed by a wide margin, perhaps 14 percent of the workforce. But carrying this many idle workers began to destroy profits at an unacceptable pace, even for firms that believed strongly in the old system. A continued adherence to lifetime employment threatened a company's survival. After growth halted in 1992, corporate profits in Japan fell by nearly half. At the same time, the altered economic climate began to dissipate the old concerns about finding workers at a later date. The traditional hiring in anticipation of future needs stopped. By 1993, Ministry of Labor figures showed only seventy-five job offerings for every one hundred job seekers. By 1994, those one hundred seekers competed for only sixty-three offerings.

As this pressure built, the layoffs began. They started with the small, less well capitalized companies but spread quickly to the large, well-known firms. In 1992, Nissan, the huge auto manufacturer, announced the closing of its Zama plant outside Tokyo, with all the attendant labor dislocation. As the first closing of a major manufacturing facility since the Second World War, it had an immediate and widespread psychological effect. But its significance went beyond the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

simple fact of being first. For years, Zama was considered the very model of Japanese efficiency and, hence, economic success. Its proximity to Tokyo made it a must stop on tours for Western businessmen, investors, and government officials. Its closing not only signaled the breaking of an important social contract but seemed to herald the end of an era of easy Japanese dominance. It was a sign of failure not just for Nissan but for all Japan. And this all took place before the yen's rise began to make headlines and before the Clinton administration decided to champion U.S. auto companies.

Japanese steel producers followed with layoffs by the thousands. A catalogue of all firms making such announcements would sound like a Who's Who of Japanese industry and commerce. During the past year alone, the number of workers in Japanese manufacturing fell by 4 percent—some by attrition, many by layoffs. The giant Toyota, which to date has stuck to lifetime employment, has alluded in its press releases to the possibility of future layoffs, for the first time since 1951. Even as Toyota's management has kept the form of the old system, it has found potential relief by violating its spirit. It recently transferred 10 percent of all white collar staff from regular employee status to "contract positions." If they need now to shed these people, management can claim to have just canceled contracts and not laid off or fired anyone.

Obviously, the destruction of this once-sacred understanding between managment and workers has contributed much to depressing the old spirit of belonging to a special national or corporate team. The layoffs also have raised practical questions about the economy's ability to recover from its economic slump. Those laid off have lost the buying power with which to help support Japanese commerce and industry. The widespread knowledge of layoffs has eroded confidence among consumers generally, which also has impaired the economy's growth potential and has contributed to the upheaval already noticed in Japanese retailing.

Perhaps even more than the changes in retailing and employment practices, this new climate has hurt Japan's faith in itself by radically depressing the prices of financial and real assets. During Japan's seemingly endless surge, investors, both domestic and foreign, bought Japanese real estate and equity shares in order to participate in what they believed was the country's fabulous economic promise. In the 1980s, that buying drove up prices on the Tokyo Stock Exchange at the fantastic rate of 20 percent a year, much more rapidly than the economy itself. In just the two-year stretch from December 1987 to December 1989, the value of Japanese shares soared by more than 90 percent. Real estate, particularly in Tokyo, followed the same

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pattern, rising rapidly and selling by the late 1980s at astronomical levels. The then president of Nomura Securities, Mr. Setsuya Tabuchi, was fond of pointing out, without exaggeration at the time, that in the fashionable Akasaka ward of Tokyo, a piece of land no bigger than a newspaper page sold for the equivalent of thirty thousand dollars. He would add, accurately for the prices of the day, that the value of the Imperial Palace in Tokyo exceeded the value of all the real estate in California and that the value of all the land in Japan equaled two times the value of all U.S. real estate plus the market value of all the stocks on the New York Stock Exchange.

While it lasted, everyone seemed to be getting rich and exuded the confidence (and arrogance) that typically accompanies such wealth. In hindsight, it is obvious how ridiculous and unsustainable this pricing situation was. In the 1980s, stocks on the Nikkei Index (Japan's equivalent of the Dow Jones Industrial Average) reached such high prices that it would have taken Japanese industry more than seventy years to buy them back, if all the current earnings of these companies were devoted to that purpose every year. Clearly, nobody expected to wait this long for returns. They counted on rapid growth to boost earnings sufficiently to produce the payback a lot sooner. (It is worth noting for the sake of perspective that U.S. stocks at the market's most euphoric reached prices that would have taken corporate America twenty-five years to buy.) Of course, in the midst of the price surges and the capital gains associated with them, people found it easy to justify the distortions by claiming that Japan was a place where the usual rules did not apply.

But as economic conditions deteriorated, the precarious nature of these pricing arrangements quickly became apparent. When recession shook confidence in the pattern of continual, rapid growth, prices fell suddenly and severely. Actually, these bloated markets sensed the economic trouble early. The Nikkei stock index peaked late in 1989, fell by almost half in the following nine months, and then declined by an additional 30 percent into mid-1995. That is equivalent to almost a three-thousand-point drop on the New York Stock Exchange's Dow Jones Index. Real estate prices took slightly longer to adjust to reality. But by late 1993, the price of commercial property in Tokyo had dropped more than 50 percent from its highs, and it has since dropped another 20 percent. In total, Japan specialists at Merrill Lynch estimate the wealth loss from these stock and real estate crashes to equal nearly ¥30 trillion (about $300 billion at recent exchange rates). That loss equals 7 to 8 percent of the nation's overall annual GDP, or the equivalent of almost two full years of growth in the boom years of the 1980s.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It is easy to see how such horrific losses could rock a nation's spirit and bring about a less confident, almost defeatist tone among its people. But the damage from these market declines goes further than simply the effects of lost wealth or making a lie of former perceptions. The losses have put the Japanese financial system at great risk. Japanese banks and credit unions had invested freely in equities and real estate during the growth years. They also had lent freely to others who secured their debts with the falsely inflated stock and land values. When the markets crashed, the loss of wealth at once destroyed both their capital and the collateral behind many of their loans. It just about bankrupt the entire system.

Official announcements, always conservative, nonetheless already reveal a banking disaster far beyond the scale of the savings and loan crisis in the United States of a few years ago. Japanese regulators put banks' "non-performing" loans (on which payments are significantly late) at around ¥50 trillion (about $500 billion at recent exchange rates) or about 8 percent of all bank lending. These figures exclude the bad debt held by other financial institutions and other questionable loans of the banks. Private analysts put all such shaky loans at about three times the government figure. If these estimates are accurate, then upwards of one-quarter of Japanese bank lending is in jeopardy of failing. And because the banks also had put part of their own capital into these markets, they lost in a way that is impossible in the West, where regulators prohibit banks from investing their own capital in stocks. Far beyond the S&L crisis in the U.S., Japan's banking crisis has no parallel in the West short of the banking disaster at the beginning of the Great Depression.

There are signs, too, that like Americans in that great banking crisis, depositors in Japan today are prone to panic and will run on the banks to withdraw their funds at the first whiff of a problem. Fortunately, Japanese regulators have handled the situation better than their American counterparts did in the 1930s. The Japanese Ministry of Finance has acted in several ways to calm depositor concerns: injecting reserves into shaky institutions, allowing some asset sales, and, most notably, promoting the recent merger of the Bank of Tokyo and Mitsubishi Bank into a giant institution presumably with sufficient financial strength to help shore up the weaker areas of the country's financial system.

Even if the country can avoid the worst, this financial problem threatens to deepen the downturn. It has and will continue to dissuade banks from any further lending and, in so doing, block the means to finance growth. The very existence of the problem has weighed down the Japanese spirit by making a lie of long-held beliefs

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

about themselves and their supposedly well-managed system. Japanese clucked loudly at the S&L crisis in the States, pointing out frequently how their well-regulated insitutions could never get so deeply into trouble. They also have long bragged of how their Ministry of Finance stopped the 1987 global stock market crash by rigidly managing Japanese banks, brokers, and the Tokyo stock market. Now that the horrible financial losses of the 1990s have shown how unwarranted that former trust was, many Japanese feel a sense of betrayal on top of all the other recent blows to the nation's spirit, confidence, and faith in its "way."

Strong political leadership might have mitigated the nation's anxiety and doubts as it faced these difficulties, but, sadly, Japan has enjoyed little of that. Japanese politics have, if anything, added to the nation's adjustment problems and contributed to undermining people's confidence in themselves and their nation.

The government's failure stems in part from its having been as caught up in Japan's expectation of endless growth as everyone else. For the Japanese government that meant an undue reliance on deficit financing. It made sense when rapid growth was creating the additional resources with which to repay the borrowing. It is ironic that, in a nation renowned for thrift, Japanese officials actually went considerably further than their U.S. counterparts in using debt to finance government services. The Japanese government deficit in 1995, if calculated on a comparable basis to that used in the United States, would equal some 5.5 percent of the nation's GDP, compared with around 3 percent in the United States. This, of course, rendered government horribly inflexible in dealing with the recession once it came. This budget deficit, more than anything else, is why official Japan has put forward such meager spending programs to turn the economy around and why it has resisted U.S. pressure to cut taxes. Governmental impotence also helps explain why the Japanese people have yet another reason to feel somewhat betrayed by their once-trusted economic managers.

It is "most unfortunate," to use the translation of a popular Japanese phrase, that the country's economic trouble has developed at the end of the Cold War. Had the old political and military imperatives persisted, they, at least, would have offered Japan a sense of purpose in the absence of strong leadership. Japan could have continued its role as a base for free-world interests in Asia, received accommodations from the United States and the protection of its nuclear umbrella, and so retained the freedom to pursue economic growth and commercial advantage without the many policy and diplomatic complications that beset other world powers. But

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

with the Cold War over, these patterns are no longer tenable.

The unusually rough nature of the latest round of U.S.–Japan trade negotiations is indicative of the change. The Clinton administration, with its willingness to jettison old Cold War patterns, showed a much less genteel approach than did the Reagan and Bush administrations, with their understandable adherence to the old patterns. Yet, Reagan and Bush, for all their gentility, got an agreement to guarantee U.S. semiconductors a specific share of Japan's domestic market. With Japan also changed, Clinton's tough trade team failed to get a comparable agreement on autos.

As with the rest of the industrialized world, the removal of the Cold War's threats also has affected Japanese domestic politics, impelling people to re-evaluate national priorities. Much like the Italians, the Japanese seem to have lost all patience with politics and their politicians. They once tolerated considerable official corruption just to maintain an established order in the face of external and internal threats. Now they aim to punish those responsible, almost without thought to potential replacements.

In the six years since Japan's electorate revealed its new impatience in its reaction to the bribery scandal surrounding the Recruit Company, the country has had eight prime ministers. Most have resigned under intense public pressure. Along the way, the long-ruling, pro-business Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) has lost its once overwhelming majorities in both houses of the Diet (parliament). Since mid-1993, when the LDP first lost its clear majority in the lower, more powerful house of the Diet, Japan has been ruled by shaky coalitions. These, by their nature, have had difficulty giving clear direction for the reforms needed to cope with the changing times and the demands they are placing on the country's increasingly ill-suited practices and structures.

The present government, an unlikely LDP-Socialist coalition, has no basic philosophy of government, no vision, and no agenda beyond simply staying in power. Both its major elements have given up philosophical and ideological positions to join in this dubious alliance. And they offer nothing with which to replace them. Neither these parties nor the fragmented opposition offers a clear platform for the future or even the beginnings of one.

The lack of leadership is especially debilitating, because there is a pretty clear consensus on where the country needs to go. Almost every Japanese businessman, labor leader, academic, and financial figure wants to move Japan away from its protected, micro-managed state toward a more open, less regulated environment. Ishino Ozawa, a prominent leader of the opposition, writes: "Since the war . . .

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Japanese companies have grown because of the government's protection and interventionist policies." But, he argues further, such practices are no longer appropriate or effective, and he calls for a shift to permit more competition from both within and without. Even the staid, formal reports of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry point in this same general direction. There is dispute over how to accomplish such a move and over the degree to which things ought to change, but the direction is clear. Without some movement in that direction, the strong feeling is that Japan will lack the necessary flexibility with which to meet new diplomatic imperatives, the demands of the dynamic global economy, and the pressure of fast-moving global financial markets. People fear that without making needed changes, Japan will lose much of the ground gained in the past fifty-odd years of extraordinarily hard work.

Yet, Japan today remains ditched and diked throughout with rules, licenses, informal guidance, prescribed procedures, and the like. Most inhibit trade and block competition in precisely the manner to which the reformers object. The Japanese tax system, for example, is mind-bogglingly complex. One German banker in Japan has described it as "third-world" and prone to create an ill distribution of wealth, development, and effort. Farmland is taxed at 1/2000 the rate of residential property. Medical doctors pay a top tax bracket less than half of that of other professions. The list of seemingly arbitrary and distorting rules goes on. Despite the rise of discounting in the retail area, ministries still dictate much of who can sell what products and frequently at what prices. Though they lack the formal power, they still can get their way by threatening to slow or withhold needed approvals, licences, etc.

In this same regulatory spirit, the Ministry of Finance and the Bank of Japan retain close control of financial markets, designating which institutions can use which products or procedures under which circumstances and when. A study on the effect of regulation by Nobuyuki Saji of the Nikko Research Center showed that fully one-third of Japan's workforce is employed in heavily regulated industries. That same study blames regulation for creating a rigid, anti-competitive system. In one calculation, Saji's study concludes that the regulatory structure renders Japan's internal distribution system 40 percent less efficient than that of the United States.

This kind of thick regulation remains, despite the consensus on reform, because the government is simply too weak to push it past the country's remaining narrow interest groups and the bureaucrats. Even though several government reports advocate reform, senior civil servants, clinging to old prerogatives and perquisites, remain largely

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

resistant to change. Mr. Saji's work for the Nikko Research Center clearly identifies the economic bureaus as the main force blocking reform. The general public seems to agree and as a consequence has changed suddenly from its once-high regard for these officials to a new contempt. The inability to create needed change naturally raises additional doubts about the country's future, and, set against the backdrop of people's once-great faith in the regulators and their approach, it adds to the already large sense of betrayal by the system. Both feelings feed on each other to further dispirit people and break their confidence in the Japanese "way" and the worthiness of the Japanese "team."

Any nation could lose faith in itself, facing, as Japan does, such a raft of difficulties—market crashes; banking crises; the demise of long-held, cherished practices; political impotence; regulatory intransigence—especially coming, as they have, on the heels of a long period of remarkable success. In some respects, Japan faces something analogous to Britain, when her empire dissolved after World War II, and to the United States, after Vietnam and OPEC shattered its faith in limitless potential.

What is more, national self-doubt, though itself the result of economic and financial problems, adds its own independent impediment to social and economic development. John Maynard Keynes took pains in his classic work *The General Theory of Money, Interest and Prices* to underscore the critical role of confidence to an economy. To grow, he argued, countries need to invest in the future. To take the risks implicit in such investment, they need the spirit and dynamism that a people get from a sense of purpose and confidence in themselves. Keynes rather dramatically referred to this feeling as "animal spirits." According to Keynes and many other economists, the lack of such confidence in the future becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. It will kill risk taking and investment, and so future prosperity.

Actually, Japanese culture makes the loss of spirit there that much more dangerous than it would be in a Western nation. The difference lies primarily in the relative status of the individual in society. Western nations, by stressing the individual, effectively provide a second source of motivation for people when a national or group effort falters. Because Japan, historically and culturally, has de-emphasized the individual in favor of a collective identity, it gives people little of this alternative support and motivation when they lose faith in the national "team" effort. For Westerners unfamiliar with the Japanese attitudes, it is hard to gauge the extent of this vulnerability.

To be sure, Japan has come a long way toward Western values and toward emphasis on the individual since the American Lafcadio

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Hearn first described the group emphasis of Japanese culture in the late nineteenth century or even since Ruth Benedict published her remarkable anthropological study of Japanese culture, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, in the late 1940s. But despite this pro-Western movement, Japan remains very un-Western. Karel van Wolferen described the still-powerful group emphasis in his extensive 1990 work, *The Enigma of Japanese Power*. Of course, Westerners, too, have a strong impulse to belong to a group, corporate and national, and adopt a team spirit. But in Japan it goes beyond commonplace social motivation.

Japanese firms speak of workers, white collar and blue, not as employees but as "members," as if they were part of a club or family. Karel van Wolferen even found this intense need to belong to the group in the sense conveyed by the Japanese word for race, *mizoku*. According to van Wolferen, the Japanese meaning goes beyond the straightforward anthropological classifications typically used in the West, or even the now old-fashioned reference to a common culture and history sometimes meant by the word *race*. Japanese use it to imply an "organismal," "familiar" solidarity. Van Wolferen's perspective gives added meaning to the popular Japanese expression (when communicating with foreigners) *ware, ware Nihonjin*, "we Japanese."

The Japanese emphasis on the group leaves little room for the popular Western (and very American) ideal of the pursuit of personal happiness. To the Japanese, that can actually seem vaguely immoral. In its place, Benedict describes the Japanese sense of "debt" to their ancestors and everyone around them for having civilized the world. Such feelings make a person less concerned with his or her own desires than with acceptance by the group and winning its approval. A person's self-respect in Japanese culture grows from the group, not from his or her own judgment. Even the Japanese word for sincerity, *makoto*, refers back to the group. The Japanese use it as an expression of how thoroughly a person has internalized group goals and his or her role in the group. They say, "*Makoto* makes it [*it* being the role and group goal] stick."

In the past, this impulse to act as a group gave Japan a marvelously eager and loyal labor force, with a willingness to work hard and sacrifice to produce what became that country's economic miracle. Japanese companies and the government reinforced the pattern. Firms promulgated their own "company spirit" (*shafu*). Some even put a shinto shrine on the premises to respond to and promote the workers' desire for a spiritual significance to the group effort. Company goals, quite naturally, were linked to national purposes. In the words of Hitachi Shipbuilding's company song: "We pray for Hitachi

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Zosem, which develops the nation's wealth." In the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, as the effort bore fruit and Japan grew rich and economically powerful, the Japanese people found confirmation of their approach. Practical results told them that their cultural imperatives were right and that they were wise to serve the group effort with such phenomenal amounts of work, energy, and attention to quality, all for relatively meager (by Western standards) personal reward.

In the face of today's self-doubt, however, Questions naturally arise about the country's ability to recapture any of the powerful cultural force that once propelled this marvelous economic machine. Perhaps Japan will find a new "way" to capture the enthusiasm and *makoto* of its admirable people. It did after the Second World War, when it abandoned the militaristic "way" of *bushido* in favor of the now-familiar "way" of business and commerce. Given Japan's remarkable history, the world ought to hope that the country finds something constructive. At the moment, however, the nation seems adrift with neither a sign of a resurgence of the old "way" nor a replacement.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Is Music Unspeakable?

JACQUES BARZUN

Whereof one cannot speak,
thereof one must remain silent.
—Wittgenstein

FEW READERS today would recognize the name of Donald Ogden Stewart, though in his time he wrote some entertaining things. One was *Perfect Behavior*—what to do on various occasions. The section "On Taking a Lady to a Concert" begins this way: "As soon as you are seated, express the wish that the orchestra will play *Beethoven's Fifth.* If your companion asks, Fifth what? you are safe for the rest of the evening."

This brief scene contains the essence of the present discussion. After a concert there is a natural urge to talk. Music is a strong stimulus that calls for outward release. But there is also the wish to be safe, the fear of saying the wrong thing. This awkward relation of words to music is what I hope may be made clearer by considering some neglected facts.

To begin with, why this fear? Nobody is afraid to talk about the play just seen or the novel just read. But music is believed to be something apart. It is forbiddingly technical, and in spite of its direct appeal it seems to have no namable links to daily life, such as are obvious in the novel and the play.

This lack is confirmed by warnings from the musical authorities: anything you say about music, other than technical, will be silly or irrelevant. And we have all heard the anecdote of the composer who played his latest piece to his guests, after which one of them asked what its meaning was. The composer sat down at the piano again and played the piece through once more.

The composer's answer was entirely right. But it holds good not

✪ JACQUES BARZUN, distinguished critic and historian, is the author of *Music in American Life* and *An Essay on French Verse for Readers of English Poetry.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

just for music. The meaning is inside any work of art and it cannot be decanted into a proposition. Nor does that fact settle the question I have raised. Despite all the warnings and anecdotes, there is an enormous amount of verbalizing about music. Concerts supply program notes, music on disks comes with comments on the covers or in booklets, and newspapers print daily reviews. Are all these words silly or irrelevant?

In program notes, to be sure, there may be bits and pieces of technical description—"the cadence is pleasantly postponed by a run of syncopated chords reminiscent of the second subject." Or: "the piece is scored for the usual strings, two flutes, two trumpets, four bassoons (French practice)," and so on. Quite useless to the laity, superfluous for the professional—and contrary to the intent of art. For the composer's aim is not to show how clever or correct or daring he has been, but to convey an immediate and complete impression of what he has conceived.

How then can his work be talked about, not assigned a meaning, but described and characterized? Human experience can be widely discussed only in common words. Fortunately, program notes contain few technicalities and daily reviews even fewer. There we are told about the quality of the performance and perhaps about the composer's relation to his time or his peers. The rest—usually the larger part—points out significant details in the music and tries to describe them in ordinary language. Let us look at some examples:

—Even though familiar, Haydn's vivid modulation to C Major on the words "Let there be light!" is still a thrilling visual effect.

— Beethoven touches on the range of expressivity available to him, from pessimism to utopian hopefulness, from a kind of coarse bombastic physicality to the most sublime spiritual subtleties.

—Hugo Wolf's art is a means of framing, embodying, presenting, and enacting the life of words.

This last seems a restatement of the problem; the Haydn rashly invokes our eyesight; and the Beethoven psychologizes freely. All offer ideas that some other listener might dispute. What to make of all this? I believe the Haydn example can suggest how to sort out the tangle, but first, let us be skeptical. When I hear the "let there be light" passage, I for one do not *see* anything. Some people do see, like Scriabin, who had what is called synesthesia, the perception of color when a note is sounded. But that is a rare anomaly. All the same, I agree with the reviewer that Haydn has done with sounds what the words denote; the music is more than appropriate; it is perfect.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Before giving the reason, let us be critical again. Why doesn't that particular change of key in other pieces generate the feeling of the Creator's flooding the cosmos with light? If there were a fixed relation between sound and idea, it would severely limit composition. C major would be permanently tied to Con Edison. Yet we find it equally apt elsewhere; for instance as the key of the Overture to *Meistersinger.*

In the eighteenth century and in ancient Greece, musicians believed that the several keys and modes did arouse each a definite emotion. Handel and his contemporaries called the system "the affections" and used it in their operas as a matter of course. But they had sense enough not to make it into a fixed code.

What then is the way out of these contradictions—words are used about music but shouldn't be; sounds suggest ideas, but there's no telling which. The facts, I think, are these: sounds, rhythms, and tone color strike us in definite ways depending on the manner in which they are combined, led up to, contrasted, and varied in speed or volume. These impressions are perfectly definite and distinct, but they have no names.

They are not emotions in the ordinary sense of joy, anger, hope, grief, and the rest. What is stirred up by music lies below the emotions, or at least at the core of more than one at a time. For example, anger and hatred seem to have the same inner character; likewise grief and despair, love and joy. The American composer Roger Sessions calls these innermost stirrings "motions or gestures of the spirit." They could also be called visceral pulses. The Haydn effect is not visual, it is visceral.

In saying *visceral* I am not denying Sessions' attribution to spirit, only pointing at the natural root of the spiritual. Is it not true that groups of feeling appear to us as linked at least to tempo and dynamics? Sadness, longing, regret are not loud and should be slow; joy, eagerness, triumph are loud and fast. What threatens seems to growl low in the bass, but fear is up in the treble.

Strange connections—and strange words too, for there are no high and low sounds in music. The notes of the piccolo and of the tuba emerge and travel at the same height above the ground. Incidentally, the ancient Greeks spoke of high and low notes too, but because of the way they tuned and held their stringed instruments, they called low what is our high and vice versa.

Again, we think of tenderness, hesitancy, and sleep as soft, which is another curious metaphor since music is neither hard nor soft. But there is no avoiding such words, as musicians demonstrate with their technical terms: *allegro* means joyful; *adagio* at ease; *andante* walking;

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tremolo, agitato trembling, disturbed. These and dozens of others, some invented ad hoc for one passage, direct how it should be not only played but felt. Whatever the cause, the tie between inarticulate sounds and bodily states is a fact of experience.

That the response is visceral is vividly shown when we look at players and conductors in action. The orchestra player is cramped by his instrument, his neighbor, and his music stand, yet he sways as much as he can and thrusts his head forward at emphatic moments; but the conductor is free to let fly all the gestures that the music imparts to his viscera. How individual his antics are, and how appropriate! They help keep the listeners in their seats, for they too are moved to beat time and wave their arms. The conductor is their surrogate, popular in proportion to his elasticity.

But have you noticed that singers do not gyrate? They are content with changes of facial expression. Why are they immune to the visceral impulses? They are not immune; they carry them out through their lungs, throat, and diaphragm—a workout as strenuous and as expressive of the music as the conductor's.

This connection between musical impression and physico-spiritual response is the source from which the art of music draws its expressive power and its artistic importance. If music merely tickled the ear, it would still be agreeable, but it would remain a trifling pastime. We know it is much more, and it is plain that the composer can indeed use sounds to set off a particular stirring within us.

But the stirring is nameless, so that if it does not accompany the words of a text and yet we want to refer to it, we have to make up some analogy. As a result, different speakers, different reviewers invent different analogies for precisely the same musical impression. The words of Haydn's oratorio are one analogy for the burst of C major. But other events would go with the music just as well—say, the escape of a prisoner unjustly condemned; or Dante's first sight of Beatrice; or a wanderer in the desert reaching an oasis; or even Archimedes leaping out of his bath and shouting "Eureka!" because he has found the solution to his problem. Viscerally, these correspond.

The list of possible situations, of possible notions analogous to a given musical stimulus is limited only by one's imagination, which in practice is guided by one's tastes or one's knowledge: Beethoven's life and letters will suggest the interpretation I quoted of pessimism, bombast, and idealism in the Ninth Symphony.

But it must not be forgotten that such connections, though valid, are never cast-iron. Aaron Copland wrote a choral piece called *In the Beginning*, which also has the words "Let there be light!" What sounds did they inspire? The reviewer tells us: "Copland piles on layers of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

skittish counterpoint. The music is almost crazed with wonder." Here adjectives do the work of analogy: skittish, piled in layers, and so on.

Of course, it is easy to challenge the adjectives and to make fun of the analogies. Somebody in the nineteenth century said that the opening chords of Beethoven's *Fifth You-Know-What* represent Fate Knocking at the Door. All right, but the knocking repeats and repeats; if it were real life, one would call the police. And it's a feeble Fate that can't get in at the first knock. Ridicule is a useful reminder that analogies are never literal, only suggestive, and that they must not be carried beyond the spot where they serve as signposts.

If the thought occurs that turning particular musical impressions into words in this free and easy way is an offense against the art of sound, which some people want to protect from everything "extra-musical," from all that is "literary," think again. Musicians have set words in songs, operas, cantatas, and oratorios for four hundred years and have prided themselves on making the music fit the words. What is the sense of those words but an extended analogy?

The composer's mind obviously moves from sound to sense and back again, not caring what critics afraid of words may say. On occasion this shuttling has been noted down. In Beethoven's *Egmont*, for example, the margins of the score are dotted with comments such as: "Here Liberty is vindicated." A passage in Goethe's drama had inspired those sounds.

Now if a drama inspires a work for instruments alone, the piece will be a series of moments distinctly characterized and put together according to some plan, just as in oratorio or opera. That simple-minded observation brings us to the confused subject of Program Music.

The current dogma is that program music is a bastard storytelling genre invented early in the nineteenth century, largely by Berlioz and Liszt. But if you pick up the thick tome on the subject by the old-time German scholar Frederick Niecks, you find that he begins his survey with the Renaissance contrapuntists, including Palestrina, and that he ends with his own contemporaries, Strauss, Mahler, and Brahms.

So the attribution to Berlioz and Liszt is a myth. Program music itself is a myth. What it is accused of doing cannot be done: musical sounds cannot tell a story. At the same time, music cannot be composed without a program, or, if you prefer, a plan. The primary plan or program is what we call its form—sonata, fugue, rondo, aria da capo; or the longer ones—suite, concerto, symphony. All these are conventions—extra-musical—since there is nothing in the nature of sound that compels a suite to have three movements, fast, slow, fast,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and a symphony four, the second being slow and the third a scherzo, which means a joke. Similarly, the scheme of sonata form or aria da capo *is* a scheme, not the product of a law of nature.

Underlying these forms is a human preference, a visceral yearning, for symmetry and balance, for unity with variety. This holds for all the arts, permitting parallels. Goethe called architecture frozen music, because in a building we see at once the proportions and contrasts within the symmetry. In music—or shall we say in "melted architecture"?—we perceive these features as they unroll. In western music, as in the other arts that "unroll," the complex forms tend to follow that of oratory: exposition, development, recapitulation, and conclusion.

So much for program no. 1. No. 2 enters in when the music accompanies words, in song, cantata, oratorio, or opera. The critical mind then notes how well the composer has fulfilled the joint demands of the two programs. But notice that the composer does not try to match every idea in his text. Much of it is unimportant, repetitious, often silly—a fact that argues strongly against the menace of supertitles at the opera.

The truth to remember here is that the overwhelming proportion of western music has been composed to words, words that refer to actions and ideas. The reason is that music has been for use: in church and in the theater; for dancing, hunting, and marching into battle; for glamorizing civic celebrations, and for rhythmic help to workmen on land and sea; all this in addition to domestic entertainment, mostly sung poetry, with its usual themes of love, death, deceit, revenge, springtime, and drinking.

It was only in the 1890s that the notion of "pure art" was touted, music being hailed as the purest—no subject matter, no basis in material substance. It should therefore remain absolute, so as to lift the listener into the contemplation of pure form. The doctrine was snobbish—and fallacious. When one is watching Pavarotti sing, one can hardly believe that music has no substantial basis in matter. And at Philharmonic Hall, when 110 men and women are vigorously blowing and scraping in concert, they set in motion thousands of cubic feet of air, to such effect that when they stop, the audience cannot help breaking out in a clamor of its own. This material assault of music on the sensorium is in fact the only excuse for the barbaric custom of clapping and shouting bravos.

But the spell of the words *pure* and *absolute* is strong and leads to absurd illusions. I remember a concert of chamber music, performed by a group of talented youngsters whose leader, in his prefatory comments, described one of the Bach inventions as absolute music, because (he said) the score showed only notes—no other indications. I

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was tempted, when mingling later with the players, to tell him that if they had played the notes as written, the piece would have been intolerable. Fortunately, they had added tempo, bowings, and dynamics, inserted a crescendo, and wound up with the usual rallentando.

Some critics want to make music pure and absolute by another route: they claim it as the twin of mathematics—"numbers in motion" (as they put it), a formal, abstract game accessible only to learned minds. This is snobbish and fallacious too. Though western music obeys certain rules arising from its chosen system of scales, these rules are far from having the rigidity of mathematics. Every age has violated some of those that were sacrosanct earlier.

As for the mathematics of vibrations—the physics of sound—our music throws it overboard in the inspired cheating called equal temperament, the pretense that C sharp is the same as D flat, which enables the composer to roam freely among the keys. If you add that concert pitch has been raised and lowered ad lib for two hundred years, you can see how little respect our music pays to numbers.

With all this in mind, we can lay to rest the superstition of purity and the crime of program music. The works so called are but one application of the linkage between sounds and visceral response already described. The only difference between opera and symphony on this point is that for the symphony the idea, mood, or action is indicated separately beforehand. The difference is negligible, since new listeners to opera or oratorio also acquaint themselves with the action ahead of time.

How then did the bad connotation of program come about and why blame the nineteenth century? This is what happened. To the musicians and audiences of that time, Beethoven's symphonies were chaotic works, unintelligible. To make them palatable, the composer E. T. A. Hoffmann (the same as in *Tales of Hoffmann*) had the idea of making up narrative analogies. They would put the listener in a suitable frame of mind to perceive the works' deep significance.

Others followed suit, or thought up titles, such as *Eroica Symphony* or *Moonlight Sonata*, and thus began the practice of giving concert-goers "program notes." Sometimes, different fictions were offered for the same work, and literal-minded people, noticing the discrepancy, decided that "programs" were a fraud.

No doubt some were foolish or far-fetched. But if a symphony can be as dramatic as a work with a text, why object when the composer says what drama he had in mind? He can, like Beethoven, tell us that his music was conceived for *Egmont*, or like Berlioz in his *Symphonie Fantastique*, he can dream up a story of his own. By now, audiences are so familiar with this device of orientation that composers rely simply

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

on a title. Berlioz led the way after the *Fantastique* had become well known, by saying that the titles of the five movements were sufficient.

Titles suggest the play or the novel, the personage, the landscape, or occasion that inspired the artist. Thus: Strauss's *Don Quixote*, Mendelssohn's *Fingal's Cave Overture*, Liszt's *Tasso*, Ravel's *Mother Goose Suite*, Brahms's *Academic Festival Overture*. And so it goes: just recently I came across notices of *Between the Tides* and *Windswept Peaks*.

None of these indications implies that program no. 1, the musical form, has been forgotten or maltreated. Who could listen with patience to an incoherent, lopsided piece? It follows that so-called program music is "pure music"—like every other genre: all consist solely of organized sounds.

And as always, any influence from the program on the work occurs only at important moments and when it is musically manageable. Hence the point of the mockery is rather blunted in the anecdote about Debussy's *La Mer*, of which the full title is *From Dawn to Noontime on the Sea*. At the first performance his ill-natured colleague Erik Satie went up to the composer and said: "I liked particularly the passage around half past eleven."

Regrettably, discussions of program music are often muddled by the intrusion of an entirely different subject. I mean musicians' attempts to imitate natural noises. The classic instance is Beethoven's *Sixth Symphony*, called *Pastoral* because it professes to give us the sounds of a country scene—a brook, a bird, a storm. I say attempts, because such echoes are rarely exact; the brook in the *Pastoral* ripples only by listener's courtesy.

If imitation seems childish, then so must we call the great composers who have gone in for it. Haydn has an array of farmyard animals in *The Creation*; Bach in the *St. Matthew Passion* imitates the earthquake and the tearing of the veil in the temple; Strauss gives us the bleating of sheep in *Don Quixote*; and opera composers from earliest days to Handel, Rossini, Wagner, and beyond have fallen into the temptation like ninepins.

One question remains: what about compositions such as Mozart's G Minor Symphony or a rousing Bach fugue, or the great piano sonatas and string quartets that also "signify" but lack title or indicated setting? Do they exist merely to show off the form? I suggest that *if worth hearing* such works have a "visceral program."

Ask yourself what makes the difference between a Bach fugue that stirs you memorably and one that is academically correct but dull? You will probably answer that on a given day Bach was inspired. What this means is that as he composed, his inner pulses led him to do one thing rather than another in rhythm, melody, and counterpoint,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

thereby weaving a richly evocative pattern around the skeleton pattern known as fugue. Such gestures of the spirit inform every piece of music that moves us. They constitute what might be called program no. 3.

I come at last to the latest use of the word *program*, as a verb, as in—let us say—"Program your ears." My purpose is to dispel another dogma, closely related to the others: the notion that music is a universal language. Music is not a language, for it is inarticulate and needs words even to be played right. And music is not one and universal: there are musics, in the plural.

Millions who are passionate about the popular genres will tell you that classical music "means nothing" to them. Then there are the ethnic musics of the world, with their different scales, instruments, and cultural associations. You hear, but are disconcerted: you do not understand. Indeed, East Indian musicians maintain that you don't even hear their rhythmic subtleties, let alone relish them.

Worse still, because commonly overlooked, music lovers in the West divide into innumerable factions, fanatical sects that worship at different shrines. They "cannot understand" what others find in this or that composer, this or that period, this or that genre. Many despise opera; to some, piano music is the only music; to the devotee of chamber works the orchestra is bombastic. It is idle to say they understand but do not like, since what they reject as "making no sense" speaks entrancingly to others,

Composers are often the most hostile of these self-appointed dunces. Tchaikovsky thought Bach a bore; Benjamin Britten detested Beethoven; Hugo Wolf depreciated Brahms. Debussy loathed Gluck. What is eloquent to one is incoherent to another—just listen to Charles Wuorinen about the whole of French music.

Shall we explain this as "visceral incompatibility"? Yes and no. Yes, because these revulsions are as deep-rooted as music itself. No, because some may change. In my youth, truly musical people regarded Italian opera as fit only for the hurdy-gurdy. Various masters were deemed "rhetorically competent, but empty of significance," Berlioz, Dvoŕák, Bruckner, and Mahler among them. One could read in a best-selling highbrow novel: "When I hear Mozart, I want to throw open the windows." The large fund of Baroque music was scarcely tapped. But a little later, when Frank Lloyd Wright had finished his Guggenheim Museum, he decreed that music should be diffused through the building, but should not include anything composed after 1800.

Clearly, fashion is a great dictator. And change of fashion says

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

something fundamental about music: many hidden factors govern receptivity. For example, the contempt for Mozart came during the Marxist thirties, when all art had to be "a weapon in the class struggle." His works were frivolous frittering. Then came the cold war, and it curiously favored the vogue of the modern Russian masters. Again, it was the long-playing disk that established Berlioz, because it is by repeated hearing that he becomes congenial. In short, the current situation programs the ear.

Nor is this all. The experience of music is far from being one and the same for everybody. The English psychologist P. E. Vernon studied its variations and found by testing audiences that nobody—not even the most proficient—takes in music *straight.* It is filtered through all sorts of conscious and unconscious elements of personality, and these vary again with mood, health, and surrounding opinion.

All who are not deaf hear the piece, but not all follow it. To some, music is no more than what Santayana described as "a drowsy reverie interrupted by nervous thrills"—which is not to say that such people are not sincerely fond of music and respectable concertgoers.

There are also other ways of incomplete hearing. A student or professor of music may be analyzing the work instead of yielding to it; he is talking shop to himself and may miss seeing how some fault, academically regarded, is a telling effect. In short, exactly like brains and eardrums, viscera differ. Some are sluggish, others febrile; some plod along *moderato,* and still others, unreliable, respond waywardly.

Dr. Vernon confirmed that understanding most often depends on habit. People brought up on piano music dislike choral works, and so on for all the genres and all the periods. And when he gave a concert of unidentified pieces, he found that not knowing the title and composer's name interferes with comprehension. One does not listen to everything alike; one programs oneself at the outset with different expectations for Vivaldi and for Varèse.

This explains much in the history of music. A new and original composer—say Bartók—has a hard time getting accepted, because the audience lacks any favoring preconceptions. It might be said that his music is not really heard until it is familiar. All of which is further evidence not only that music is not a universal language, but also that as it exists in this world it is always something more and something less than the sounds emitted in the concert hall. We do not absorb music like a microphone but as human beings.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Motion We Cannot See

DAVID MASON

We found the path somewhat as it had been:
heather and rock of an alpine meadow
ringed by peaks like giants in a myth
we never learned; all our lives
we had played among them, and perhaps
our grief was payment of an unknown debt.

Perhaps the strange mist
caused us to question the path,
but our boots made a familiar sound
on the dirt runnel; the gray rocks
and stunted firs were congregated
as before.

We couldn't say why we had come,
two living brothers and our father
whose hands were like ours
and like our brother's hands,
bones and hair so much like ours,
flesh of our silent flesh.

I saw the place where we had cupped
the ashes, letting them blow
and drift over the heather.
A year of snow and snowmelt later
what could be left of him,
so utterly possessed by mountains?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Yet after the year of weather
tiny pieces of my brother's bone
still lay in clefts of rock.
We found them under our hands,
cupping them once again in wonder
at what the giants left us.

Since then I have not gone back
to hold my brother's bones. The prayers
of blizzard and snowmelt have him now,
and time flows down the mountain like the ice,
a motion we cannot see,
though it bears our blood almost forever.

✪ DAVID MASON's poems have appeared in the *Hudson Review*, the *Sewanee Review*, and other magazines. He is the author of two volumes of poems, *The Buried Houses* and *The Country I Remember*, both published by Story Line Press.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

What Should We Ask About Intelligence?

ROBERT J. STERNBERG

ALICE WAS THE admissions officer's dream. She had 800s on her boards, close to a 4.0 average, and glowing letters of recommendation from her teachers. She was the proverbial good student with paper credentials that just couldn't be beaten. She was accepted by every graduate program to which she applied. We were thrilled when she decided to matriculate in Yale's doctoral program in psychology.

The tests and other predictors of success were correct as far as they went: Alice excelled in her first year of course work, competing with just one other student for the highest academic average in an already highly selective program. Then something went wrong—something big. By the time Alice was done with the program, she was roughly in the bottom 20 percent of her cohort. And it wasn't that she didn't try. On the contrary, she was highly motivated to succeed.

What went wrong with Alice is what has gone wrong with thousands and thousands of students: they are brilliant when it comes to remembering and even analyzing ideas, but they are dim when it comes to generating their own ideas. They may have 700s or even 800s on their boards, and often IQs of 140 and above, but they seem to lack even an ounce of creativity. In other terms, they are analytically, but not creatively, intelligent.

Contrast the fate of Alice to that of Barbara. Barbara applied to Yale's graduate program in psychology with good but not outstanding grades. More notable were her superb letters of recommendation from eminent people and her record of published work. The impressive creativity of this work was apparent to almost anyone who took the trouble to read it. But Barbara's test scores, although not awful, were modest. Barbara, unlike Alice, was rejected. Moreover, the Barbaras of the world tend to be rejected, not just by Yale, but by

✪ ROBERT J. STERNBERG is the IBM Professor of Psychology and Education at Yale University.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

other highly competitive programs that can give a future scholar a head start in academic life, a future lawyer a stepping-stone to the world of law, or a future doctor an edge up on the best internships.

Barbara was one of the lucky ones. I hired her as a research associate. She demonstrated exceptional creative abilities, and two years later, when she reapplied to our graduate program, she was admitted as the top pick. She even received a special fellowship reserved for top applicants. But for every Barbara who gets a chance, there are unknown thousands like her who are consigned to the academic wastebasket—they never get the chance that Barbara got. We never find out what happened to them, because we never give them the chance to show us what they might have done.

Paul might have seemed like the ideal admissions' candidate. He combined Alice's analytical ability with Barbara's creative ability. His professors were delighted with him and expected him to be a smash hit on the academic job market. Actually, the professors weren't the only ones impressed with Paul; Paul was too, and it showed.

When Paul went on the academic job market, he was asked to interview at every institution to which he applied—an enviable record. His hit rate for getting jobs wasn't quite so enviable, however: he was offered only one position, at the weakest department to which he applied. Clearly, he was far from a desirable commodity, his analytical and creative abilities notwithstanding.

Ironically, Sam, who had received no interview offers at all in the first round, was later offered many of the interview opportunities Paul had initially flubbed. Sam was offered several positions and within a few years had tenure, whereas Paul was out of a job. Sam's work was nothing special, but he knew what his department valued, and he delivered.

What went wrong with Paul was straightforward: Paul was so lacking in common sense that he couldn't hide his arrogance even on the one day he needed to hide it—the day on which he had a job interview. And once hired, his arrogance led him quickly to become a pariah among his colleagues. Paul was analytically and creatively intelligent but lacking in practical intelligence. Sam, more modest in analytical and creative intelligence, was able to translate his practical intelligence into good, although perhaps not distinguished, career success.

The stories of Alice and Barbara and of Paul and Sam are all true, with only the names changed. They are also, in their themes, common stories in academe. But stories like these are what have led many psychologists, myself among them, to conclude that conventional notions of intelligence may be correct as far as they go but that they do

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

not go far enough. These psychologists have suggested that conventional notions of intelligence *(a)* define intelligence too restrictively and *(b)* often provide reasonable answers, but to narrow questions. The problem is that the answers may be fine, but the questions are not.

Today, the field of intelligence is going through a heated, no-holds-barred battle between adherents to a conventional paradigm that has its roots at the turn of the century and adherents to new paradigms that are attempting to turn the old paradigm on its head. The adherents to the old paradigm have reacted in various ways to the revolutionaries, all of these ways predicted in spirit by Thomas Kuhn in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions.* The traditionalists' reactions are similar to those of any entrenched power structure: they ignore the revolutionaries, hoping they will go away or not be noticed; or they give them a glancing notice but try not to take them seriously; or they fight them head-on.

Some traditionalists choose to ignore the revolutionaries altogether. Other traditionalists, such as Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray in *The Bell Curve,* briefly acknowledge the existence of the revolutionaries and then move on. But the revolutionaries are becoming harder to ignore. For example, every major college-level textbook in introductory psychology now prominently features two of the revolutionary theories, my own theory and that of Howard Gardner, a kindred spirit. Moreover, research as well as theory in the field of intelligence more and more is reflecting the revolutionary paradigms.

Still other traditionalists, among them Malcolm Ree, Jack Hunter, and Frank Schmidt, have joined the battle and chosen to take on the revolutionaries, responding to them directly in print. But what is the battle about, anyway? On what grounds is it being fought?

The grounds of the intellectual battle ought to be over "What should we ask about intelligence?" Consider a concrete example. The traditionalists take a battery of conventional tasks used to measure intelligence, such as the tasks on an IQ test, and ask: "What is the latent structure of intelligence underlying observable scores on conventional tasks used to measure intelligence?"

This is the question that Charles Spearman sought to answer in his 1904 analysis of intelligence-test performance, and it is the question that traditionalists have sought to answer ever since. Practically speaking, traditionalists are intellectual descendants of Edwin Boring, who in 1923 espoused the operationist dictum that intelligence is what intelligence tests test.

Although these traditionalists agree that intelligence tests measure intelligence adequately, they do not agree as to the latent structure

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

underlying performance on the tests. Some theorists, like Spearman in the past as well as Arthur Jensen and Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray in the present, have believed in a single, general factor of intelligence (called *g*), represented by a global IQ (intelligence-quotient) score; other theorists, like Cyril Burt and Philip E. Vernon in the past and John B. Carroll and Jan-Eric Gustafsson in the present, have believed in a hierarchy of abilities, with general ability at the top of the hierarchy, and successively more narrow levels of abilities below *g*. And other points of view have been presented as well.

The revolutionaries do not accept the answers of any of the traditionalists, because they do not accept their question. They believe that the kinds of tasks used in conventional tests of intelligence are largely arbitrary and lacking in any theoretical basis. The revolutionaries do not believe that conventional tests adequately sample the universe of tasks needed to assess intelligence. These researchers believe that the general factor is in part an artifact of the method used to analyze test scores—factor analysis. This method is mathematically designed to maximize the amount of variation that occurs in the first factor, thus yielding a general factor as a result of mathematical rather than psychological necessity. But more important, they believe that *g* is an artifact of the narrow range of kinds of tests conventionally used to measure intelligence. In their view, the general factor would disappear if the tests were more widely conceived and based on a broad, well-specified theory of intelligence.

Thus, these researchers believe that what traditionalists believe they know is a result of the traditionalists' asking too narrow a question. The revolutionaries see the so-called intelligence quotient—the IQ—as neither a quotient nor an indicator of intelligence, broadly defined. Indeed, IQs today are virtually never computed as quotients, but rather as scores derived from properties of normal statistical distributions. And they are based on a notion of intelligence that the revolutionaries believe the field should recognize as outdated.

The revolutionaries are uncomfortable with the fact that the two major tests used to measure intelligence, the Stanford-Binet and the Wechsler, are very old in their conception. The Binet tests date back to the first decade of the twentieth century; the Wechsler tests to the fourth. Successive editions of the Binet and the Wechsler tests differ largely in cosmetic ways from the original versions. Although the statistics are more sophisticated and the printing of the test booklets is better, the technology of intelligence testing has changed little in almost a century.

What kinds of abilities do the revolutionary theories of intelli-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

gence encompass? One such theory, Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, comprises seven abilities, which Gardner believes are distinct and relatively independent intelligences: *(a) linguistic intelligence*, used in reading a novel, writing a poem or an article such as this one, or generating an extemporaneous talk; *(b) logical-mathematical intelligence*, used in solving mathematical problems, proving logical theorems, or completing categorical or other forms of syllogisms; *(c) spatial intelligence*, used in finding one's way in unfamiliar terrain, figuring out how to fit suitcases into the trunk of a car, or figuring out where in a playing field a baseball batter's fly ball will land; *(d) musical intelligence*, used in remembering a tune, singing a song, or composing a sonata; *(e) bodily-kinesthetic intelligence*, used in dancing ballet, performing gymnastics, or playing tennis; *(f) interpersonal intelligence*, used in figuring out what other people mean from what they say, decoding what their facial expressions communicate, or deciding what is appropriate to say in an interaction with a superior; and *(g) intrapersonal intelligence*, used in understanding why one takes rejection so poorly, why one tends to be overconfident in certain instances, or why one has failed in achieving an important personal goal.

Gardner points out that conventional tests of intelligence measure only the first two, and sometimes the third, of the multiple intelligences. Moreover, their form of measurement is quite limited, often encompassing solely multiple-choice test items or test items that require only very restricted kinds of performances. Gardner has offered evidence from diverse sources to support his theory, including studies of brain damage, psychometric and experimental studies, and studies of psychological development, among other kinds of evidence.

Another such theory, my own triarchic theory of human intelligence, follows from observations such as those of Alice, Barbara, Paul, and Sam, as described earlier in the article. This theory holds that intelligence has three major aspects: analytical, creative, and practical. Conventional good test takers and good students tend to excel in analytical intelligence but not necessarily in the creative and practical aspects of intelligence. Underlying each of these aspects are various kinds of mental operations used to process information—for example, some operations that define what should be asked and other operations that then seek to answer what has been asked.

An implication of this theory is that the reason conventional intelligence tests predict school achievement as well as they do is that schools, like conventional tests, tend to emphasize analytical skills far more than they emphasize creative and practical skills. Indeed, the latter kinds of skills may even be punished, as when students who

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

depart from a teacher's expectations or point of view find themselves graded down for having done so.

It is scarcely surprising that conventional intelligence tests should so well reflect the abilities required for conventional schooling. The first major intelligence test—that of Alfred Binet and Théodore Simon in turn-of-the-century France—was designed to distinguish students who were genuinely lacking in academic abilities from those who were behavior problems but not lacking in these abilities. Throughout their development, there has always been a close association between tests and academic performance, which is what the tests have been designed primarily to predict.

If tests predict academic performance fairly well, why do we need revolutionary conceptions of intelligence, or, indeed, any new conceptions at all? After all, the tests are doing fairly well what they were designed to do. Why not leave well enough alone?

Before we leave well enough alone, we need to ask, What is it about academic performance that the conventional tests predict so well? They do predict grades pretty well. But once we pass on to the college or especially the graduate level, just how important are grades? Who hasn't encountered the scholars whose brilliance seems to lie only in their ability to tear other people's ideas to shreds and not in their ability to come up with any significant ideas of their own? Who hasn't met the doctor, with a medical degree from a famous medical school, whose skills with patients seem not even to meet a minimal standard of human decency? How many major companies have not hired MBAs who graduated with honors but who quickly become lunch meat for hungry predators in the dog-eat-dog world of modern business?

In one study, a colleague and I sought to address the question of just what the tests predict by validating the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) as a predictor of various kinds of performance in our own graduate program in psychology at Yale. Together with Wendy Williams, I asked professors to rate all their primary advisees who were in the psychology doctoral program between 1980 and 1991. Forty professors, including some who had left during the time period, provided ratings on a 1 (low) to 7 (high) scale of 167 graduate students (68 males, 99 females) on five scales: *(a)* analytical abilities, *(b)* creative abilities, *(c)* practical abilities, *(d)* research abilities, and *(e)* teaching abilities. Means of these ratings did not differ significantly between the sexes.

We also had available students' scores on the GRE verbal, quantitative, and analytic sections, and on the advanced test (for 73 of the students, because this test is optional). We further obtained the stu-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dents' GPAs during their first and second years of graduate training. We also had available ratings of each student's doctoral dissertation from three faculty readers (who did not include the primary advisor).

The range of GRE scores was considerable. For example, on the verbal section, the range was from 250 to 800, with a mean of 653 and a standard deviation of 96. (The standard deviation is a measure of the dispersion of scores, where roughly two-thirds of all scores fall between one standard deviation below the mean and one standard deviation above it.) Comparable data for the quantitative section ranged from 320 to 840, with a mean of 672 and a standard deviation of 78; and the analytic scores ranged from 410 to 810, with a mean of 656 and a standard deviation of 92. The range for advanced test scores was 490 to 850, with a mean of 690 and a standard deviation of 64.

We found that the GRE provided some prediction of first-year grades (correlations of 0.18 for the verbal section, 0.14 for the quantitative section, 0.17 for the analytical section, and most impressively, 0.37 for the advanced test). All of the correlations were statistically significant except that for the quantitative score. Thus, overall, the best predictor of future achievement was, perhaps not surprisingly, past achievement. But the GRE did not predict second-year grades.

The only consistent predictor of any of the more important measures of graduate performance (i.e., ratings of analytical, creative, practical, research, and teaching abilities, as well as of dissertation quality) was the GRE analytical section, and this prediction was for men only. Five of six correlations for this section were statistically significant for men, with a median correlation of 0.30, whereas none of the correlations were statistically significant for women, with a median correlation of 0.02. Thus, of eight sets of correlations (four GRE scores for each of the two sexes), only one set provided statistically significant results.

One could argue, of course, that the less than impressive predictive performance of the GRE reflects the restricted range of scores at Yale. But this explanation fails. For one thing, the standard deviations for the aptitude tests (96, 78, 92) were not far from the national average. For another, the best predictor of first-year grades, the advanced test, had the lowest standard deviation (64) of all the predictors. Moreover, the analytical test did in fact predict the ratings for men, suggesting that the ratings were not somehow simply inherently unreliable or otherwise unpredictable.

The message of the GRE study is largely negative: for the most part, a conventional test of intellectual abilities did not provide much prediction of interesting aspects of academic performance. There was some prediction, but it was only of first-year grades, and beyond that,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the prediction was for men only, and only for the analytical test. Would we stand to gain anything by a broader theory and broader tests of intelligence?

Another study I was involved with, conducted over a five-year period in collaboration with Michel Ferrari, Pamela Clinkenbeard, and Elena Grigorenko, addressed this question. We sought to learn whether prediction of academic performance at the college level would improve if we used broader tests; more important, though, we asked whether students would perform better if they were taught and their achievement assessed in ways that reflected their patterns of abilities.

We invited high schools from around the country and abroad to nominate students for a summer college-level psychology course to be taught at Yale University. Nominated students were then encouraged to take a test of intelligence based on the triarchic theory of human intelligence. The test measured not only the analytical abilities assessed by conventional IQ tests, but also creative and practical abilities. It measured these abilities in the verbal, quantitative, and figural (geometric) domains, using both multiple-choice and essay test items. For example, in the creative essay test, students had to design and describe an ideal school; in the practical figural multiple-choice test, students had to use maps and diagrams to plan complex routes, as one would do in planning a set of errands in an unfamiliar terrain.

Eventually, 199 students became part of the program in the summer of 1993. The program was simultaneously a course and an experiment. Students were selected to fit into one of five categories: high (both with respect to other students and with respect to themselves) in analytical abilities only, similarly high in creative abilities only, similarly high in practical abilities only, relatively high in all three abilities, or relatively low in all three abilities.

Students who enrolled were then assigned at random to one of four types of course, identified by the type of instruction and skills emphasized: one type of section emphasized memory skills (the control condition), requiring students to recall and recognize; a second type emphasized analytical-thinking skills, requiring students to analyze, judge, compare and contrast, and evaluate; a third type emphasized creative-thinking skills, requiring students to generate, invent, create, imagine, and suppose; and a fourth type emphasized practical-thinking skills, requiring students to use, implement, and apply concepts in their everyday lives. These sections, with their varied kinds of instruction, met in the afternoon and represented one component of the course. The basic instructional content, the text and the morning lectures, were the same for all four types of course.

Ideally, a single course would emphasize all four types of skills, so

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that students could learn both to capitalize on their strengths and to compensate for and correct their weaknesses. But part of our purpose in the study was explicitly to look at the effects of matching versus mismatching of abilities to instruction, and thus the instructional conditions were somewhat "purified" for purposes of the experiment.

All students were evaluated for memory as well as for analytical, creative, and practical achievements. The memory measures were standard multiple-choice, factual recall exams. Analytical measures required tasks such as comparing and contrasting two scientific theories or critiquing an experiment. Creative measures required students to generate their own theories and experiments. Practical measures required students to show how theories and experiments could be applied to specific case studies. What did we find?

First, with regard to our ability tests, the overall correlations between sections (analytical, creative, and practical) were low although statistically significant: 0.23 between the analytical and creative tests, 0.14 between the analytical and practical tests, and 0.15 between the creative and practical tests. Moreover, a factor analysis of the subtests revealed no general factor across all the subtests, but rather specific factors for these various subtests. In other words, the results tended to support the notion that the general factor typically obtained in conventional intelligence tests reflects, in part, the narrow scope of the tests. As the experience of many teachers suggests, students can be strong in some skills but weak in others.

Second, regardless of the measure of achievement (homework assignments, multiple-choice and essay examinations, independent projects) we used, at least two and in one case three of the kinds of abilities (analytical, creative, practical) significantly and substantially contributed to the prediction of course performance. At least one of these abilities was always analytical ability, as perhaps befits the traditional emphasis of our instruction. But the key point was that prediction of academic achievement was improved by adding the other abilities into the prediction equation.

Third, and most important, a number of different data analyses showed that students performed better when the kind of instruction they received was matched rather than mismatched to their pattern of abilities. In other words, students achieved at higher levels when they were taught in a way that recognized and encouraged their particular pattern of skills. If we teach and assess in ways that benefit primarily analytical students, we may indeed end up recognizing only these students as "smart." But if we teach and assess more broadly, we may be surprised to discover that many students are considerably more intelligent than we might have expected.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Casting a broader net becomes particularly important in a society that is as stratified as ours is, and, moreover, one whose stratification in part reflects racial and ethnic differences among its citizens. One of the interesting outcomes of our study was observed before the treatment even began. When we looked at the students who were identified as high-analytic, they looked like a typical group of "good students": mostly white, and from economically and socially privileged backgrounds. But students chosen for high scores in creative and practical skills looked quite different, in that they were much more diverse racially, ethnically, and economically. By creating a rather closed system that first rewards one type of student on ability tests and then rewards that same student in the classroom and on tests of achievement, we may be missing out on what a large segment of our population has to offer us as a society. Our tests may appear to be unbiased, not because they are genuinely unbiased, but because at least some of our criteria share the biases of the predictors. In other words, measures of achievement are biased in the same ways as are measures of abilities.

Suppose it is indeed the case that courses are taught in ways that primarily benefit analytical students, especially those with good memories. What follows is that students who are high in these abilities will look "smart" in the classroom, while those who are equally high in other abilities, such as creative or practical ones, may look quite ordinary, or even undesirable, as in the case of Barbara when she applied to our graduate program. What may result?

The failure to recognize these students' abilities may have quite serious implications for their careers. We have created a system of tests that values certain kinds of abilities, but not others. It is scarcely surprising that our society has formed what Herrnstein and Murray and others refer to as a "cognitive elite": in order to gain access to competitive colleges, as well as to competitive graduate programs, one has to test well. Students with lower test scores are often, and in many institutions, routinely, rejected. They are denied entrance to the access routes that would allow them to become distinguished doctors, lawyers, academics, executives, and so forth. The so-called cognitive elite is no fact of nature: it is something we have created, much as other societies (and our own in the past) have created elites based on the social class of one's birth. Moreover, it is based on a very limited kind of cognitive ability. The divine right of kings was neither divine nor a right: it was a creation, much like the cognitive elite. Were we to admit students to competitive colleges and graduate programs on the basis of their height, eventually we would find that individuals who are in highly regarded occupations are tall. We

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

should never confuse something we have invented with something we have discovered.

But would the students denied the access routes to desirable occupations and economic success actually succeed in the occupations that are made so hard for them to enter? At one level, we cannot answer this question, because we never do find out what might have been. But at another level it seems self-evident that abilities other than analytical ones are key in the occupations that our society values.

Consider, for example, the sciences. To get high grades at the high school and often college level, students need primarily to memorize textbooks and lectures, and, sometimes, to solve problem sets at the backs of chapters and on tests. But how similar are those tasks to the tasks confronted by scientists? Hardly similar at all. As Harriet Zuckerman has pointed out, eminent scientists are those who have good taste in the problems they study—ones who ask good questions. They are the ones who design broad, elegant, and usually empirically testable theories, or who design powerful experiments to test such theories. Excellent novelists as well as literary scholars also need to be creative, whether in the writing of novels, in the generation of literary theories, or in coming up with novel interpretations of authors' ideas. Indeed, outstanding experts in any field need to combine creative with analytical abilities.

In separate collaborations with Todd Lubart and Janet Davidson, I have done a series of studies on the creative aspects of intelligence. Studying individuals ranging in age from eight to over seventy years, we have found that the creative aspects of intelligence are relatively, although not totally, independent of analytical abilities. Perhaps more important, we have found that creative abilities are relatively domain specific: participants in our studies who were creative, say, in generating short-story lines, were often not those who were creative in producing artistic work, or in devising advertisements, or in solving scientific insight problems. There was some correlation across domains, but it was generally only weak to moderate, about 0.4. Most relevant to schooling, we have found that the students identified as "gifted" are often not particularly high in creative insight skills and that many who are high in these skills are not identified as gifted.

Scholars as well as others also need the practical abilities to be able to communicate their work effectively and to be able to persuade people that their work is worthy of attention. Academics often tend to dismiss practical abilities at the same time that they know that such abilities are key to getting articles accepted by journals, grant proposals funded by government agencies, students to pay attention in classes, and the like.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In a series of collaborations with Richard Wagner, Wendy Williams, Joseph Horvath, and George Forsythe, I have found that practical abilities among adults show virtually no correlation with IQ-like, analytical abilities across a variety of domains. The participants in our studies have ranged widely, from business executives to salespeople to university teachers. Our measurements of practical intelligence bear little resemblance to conventional intelligence tests. They involve participants reading scenarios illustrating the kinds of problems professionals encounter in their everyday professional practice, and then rating various solutions to these problems for their soundness. Ratings are then validated against those of acknowledged experts.

A participant in one of our studies on college professors, for example, might be given a scenario describing all the things a particular professor would like to get done in the next three weeks that the professor doesn't have the time to complete. The participant would then be asked to rate the priority of each of the various things the professor is considering doing.

Although scores on tests of practical intelligence such as this one do not correlate with conventional ability measures, they do predict various criteria of job success—in the case of academics, such things as productivity, citation rates, attendance at professional meetings, and quality ratings of the institution at which one is teaching. This prediction is over and above that obtained from IQ tests.

The prediction is not only for academics. In a study of business executives conducted at the Center for Creative Leadership, Wagner and I found that the best predictor of performance on two managerial simulations was our own test of practical intelligence, followed by a conventional intelligence test, and then various personality measures. In a study of sales people, our test, but not a conventional intelligence test, predicted various measures of sales performance.

Work suggesting a separation of the more "academic" aspects of intelligence, as measured by conventional intelligence tests, and more practical aspects of intelligence is not limited to my own group at Yale. It is widespread and growing. For example, Steve Ceci at Cornell has found that men who consistently picked winners at a racetrack were generally of average IQ and that there was no correlation between their IQ and their ability to pick winners. Jean Lave at Berkeley found that housewives who could easily distinguish which of two products was a better buy had great difficulty on a paper-and-pencil test of mathematical operations. And Terezhina Nunes, now at the Institute of Education in London, found that Brazilian street children who were failing math in school could nevertheless do the mathematics to keep a successful street business thriving.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The message of these and similar studies is not that conventional views of intelligence are wrong but rather that they are highly incomplete. They deal only with a sliver of what revolutionary scientists now believe intelligence to comprise. Thus, when the traditionalists discuss what we know about intelligence, they are really discussing, from the revolutionary point of view, only a narrow part of intelligence. They are answering questions, perhaps, about IQ more than about intelligence, broadly conceived.

Traditional views of intelligence will not disappear overnight. I personally believe that they are much more likely to be subsumed than to disappear, because they constitute a subset of what the revolutionaries are talking about.

There is a revolutionary war going on, as there often tends to be in fields where the excitement is the greatest. The war has not yet been won by either side. Moreover, it is not, strictly speaking, a war with only two sides. The revolutionaries have divisions among themselves. For example, I do not accept all of the assertions of Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, nor does Gardner accept all of the assertions of my triarchic theory. But we and other revolutionaries are united by our belief that IQ represents too narrow a conception of intelligence. We are also united in the view that intelligence can be modified and have done research supporting this view.

The traditionalists are holding strong in what they see as a solid fort that has withstood vigorous attacks. The revolutionaries, in contrast, see gaping and ever-expanding holes on all sides of this fort. As always, one set of data can lend itself to varied interpretations. Ultimately, perhaps, all parties to the battle will lose, as even newer and more appealing theories and tests of these theories come to the fore. But at the end of the day, that's what intellectual battles are about—the never-ending search for understanding, whether of intelligence or anything else.

I close by noting that, for me, the battle is a personal one. As a child, I did horribly on IQ tests. As a result, my teachers in the early years had low expectations, and I gave them what they wanted. They were happy and so was I. By fourth grade, I had a teacher who expected more, and I gave her more. I went from being a B–C student to being an A student. I attributed what success I came to have to going to bed early. I knew my IQ was low—what else could it be? Now, as a theorist and a researcher in the field of intelligence, I would like to think that there may have been more involved. More of what? Well, that's what I'm still trying to find out.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Darken Ship

MICHAEL SPENCE

At night, to keep the enemy
From spotting us, our lights dimmed red:
An ember's color which at sea
Won't travel far. My recruiter had said

The camaraderie of the sailors
And sights I'd see would give me tales
For home. But on my carrier—
A ship huge as a glacier of steel—

Who could even meet the whole crew?
To watch the stars, I'd step out
On the port quarter: the place we threw
Our garbage overboard. That night,

As I lounged in a far corner,
Someone backed onto the ledge.
I need more time! he cried. Two other
Shadows pushed him to the edge.

I yelled—two shapes stiffened to ice,
The third halfway over the rail.
The red lights, smudging each face,
Made comrades of us all.

✪ MICHAEL SPENCE's poems are forthcoming in *Poetry*, the *Sewanee Review*, and the *Southern Humanities Review*. His first book is *The Spine* (Purdue University Press), and he is working on a novel about the navy.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

An Earring for Erring

Robert Frost and Kay Morrison

JEFFREY MEYERS

I

THE EVENTS THAT TOOK PLACE at the beginning of Robert Frost's love affair with Kay Morrison were tragic and turbulent. Elinor Frost's death in March 1938 changed the course of his life and the development of his poetry. His fierce quarrel with his daughter Lesley alienated him from the closest member of his family. He was also debilitated by illness and depression. He began to drink heavily and to use foul language and, by his own admission, was "crazy" for the next six months. In June he abruptly resigned from Amherst College and sold his house. No longer a husband, rejected as a father, he turned to Kay Morrison, when she appeared in his life in July, and became her lover. In August he resumed his long-term association with the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference, where Ted Morrison was director. Scarcely recovered from the assault of grief and guilt, he proposed marriage to Kay. She refused but remained his manager, mistress, and muse for the last twenty-five years of his life.

After forty years of a passionately monogamous marriage, Frost now had to endure the uncertainty of a love affair with a woman who could not always put him first. In the winter of 1938–39, on a tempestuous vacation in Florida with the Morrisons, Frost became bitterly jealous. In July 1939 the Frost scholar Robert Newdick suddenly died and Lawrance Thompson, who would also become sexually involved with Kay, became his official biographer. Frost entered the hospital for a hemorrhoid operation in January 1940, and in March, from post-operative drugs, went berserk and broke up the furniture in his flat. In October his son Carol killed himself. These deaths and his

✪ JEFFREY MEYERS, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, has published biographies of Lawrence, Conrad, Poe, Fitzgerald, and Edmund Wilson. His life of Frost will be out this spring, and he is now completing a biography of Humphrey Bogart.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

own emotional upheavals both challenged and strengthened Frost's character. His poetry was recharged and given new direction in the passionate love poems to Kay that he published in *A Witness Tree* (1942).

Kathleen Florence Johnston, the daughter of a Scottish Episcopal clergyman, was born on November 18, 1898, in Parrsboro, Nova Scotia, where her father had exchanged pulpits for a year. Soon after her birth, Robert Johnston accepted a church in Stirling, then in Edinburgh, and Kay, a British citizen, was raised in Scotland. The oldest of five children, she had two brothers and two sisters, and had to put up with the white mice they kept in the bathroom. Precocious and intellectual as a child, she accompanied her father when he visited parishioners in the slums of the city.

In 1910, when Kay was eleven, Robert was offered an attractive church in Philadelphia, where they lived on fashionable Chestnut Street and she attended Miss Hill's School. Their elegant house, which she helped to run, had fine antiques, old silver, and Oriental rugs as well as several servants. Her father's private income enabled them to live in this grand style and to take summer holidays in Nova Scotia. Robert was liberal in church policy and in his Sunday sermons, but he went in for costly harebrained schemes. He suffered from "hysterical complaints" and would suddenly lose his power of speech. In the 1930s, while driving with his sister, Robert was killed in an automobile accident.

The attractive, capable, and commonsensical Kay was a member of the literary society and editor of the *College News* at Bryn Mawr. She first met Frost at a lecture during her senior year. After graduating from college in 1921, she studied English at Oxford for a year. Kay wanted to come out as a debutante and blamed her mother for not offering her a glamorous social life. She met Theodore Morrison, a young lecturer at Harvard, while they were both working on the *Atlantic Monthly* and married him on October 22, 1927. Their son Robert was born in December 1930, their daughter Anne in January 1937.

Frost's "devoted, astringent, and affectionate amanuensis" had a slight build and bright auburn hair. Well-dressed, elegant, and *soignée*, she often mumbled her words and squinted her eyes. Wade Van Dore said she was self-possessed in moments of crisis and that "outward calmness seemed to be hers by birthright." Daniel Aaron, her husband's colleague at Harvard, found her cold, distant, and officious. He thought she avoided intimacy with polite, wintry smiles and was amiable but not sexy. She was eager to maintain her husband's precarious dignity and was clearly more than a solicitous handmaiden to Frost.

Her daughter remarked that Kay was both proper and unconven-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tional. She insisted on keeping up appearances and was content as long as things seemed all right on the surface. At the Vermont farmhouse the laundry, hung on the line with the intimate garments huddled in the middle, was snatched out of sight as soon as visitors appeared. Anne was allowed to smoke when she was ten, but no lady could ever smoke in the street. Frost, who contrasted Kay to Elinor's more straightforward ways, was bothered by her "society manners" and her academic approach to poetry. The poet Adrienne Rich, Ted's student at Harvard, noticed Kay's "repressed anger and bitterness." Kay's daughter believed this came from her frustrated social ambitions, her disappointment in Robert Johnston's failure to achieve eminence and become a bishop in the church, and her uneasiness about Ted's modest and ambiguous position at Harvard.

Theodore Morrison (three years younger than Kay) was born in Concord, Massachusetts, in 1901, the youngest of four brothers. His father, an engineer, was head of the Lynn Gas and Electric Company. Two of his brothers, a pitcher-catcher team who had major-league baseball offers, went to M.I.T. and also became engineers. Ted, the literary member of the family, graduated from Harvard in 1923. He had been an editor at the *Atlantic Monthly* before joining the Harvard English Department. Since he had no doctorate, Ted could not be a professor; but as the effective and generous head of English A (which taught expository rather than creative writing), he eventually became a tenured lecturer. Kay, acutely aware that Ted's position was lower than his academic colleagues', resented the fact that her husband, like her father, had not fulfilled his promise and advanced his career.

The tall, handsome, tweedy, pipe-smoking Ted Morrison was a Roman Stoic and stiff-upper-lip New Englander who rarely revealed his feelings. He was also a kind and sensitive man who knew how to deal with Frost's moody and volatile temperament. Writing in September 1938 to Bernard De Voto, his close friend as well as Frost's, just after Frost had appeared at Bread Loaf, Ted criticized his public persona: "The colloquialism of Frost, his continually putting on the rustic tone and writing under his subjects and wearing homespun is also a limitation." Ted unfavorably compared Frost to Edward Arlington Robinson, completely missing the allusion to Robinson's "The Sheaves" in "Nothing Gold Can Stay": "I doubt, honestly, whether Frost has ever had it in him to record the sudden vanishing from perception of the stacked-up corn sheaves in the autumn in an image as gorgeous" as Robinson's.

Ted had a puritan temperament and at Bread Loaf, despite his wife's liaisons, strongly disapproved of illicit sex (an outstanding fea-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ture of many writers' conferences). He spoke of such behavior with horror, and seductive poets were not invited back. (Louis Untermeyer, a great fornicator between and during his marriages, was protected by Frost and given special dispensation.) In September 1934, when De Voto sent his latest novel, *We Accept with Pleasure*, Ted (writing from Nova Scotia) minimized the importance of sexual relations, both illicit and marital. He opposed De Voto's idea that "some mystical and romantic value is to be attributed to illegal cohabitation" and declared: "The impression left by the book is that cohabitation out of wedlock is, if not the clue, at least a necessary ingredient in arriving at personal integrity. It ain't; not even in wedlock."

II

In the spring of 1936, when Elinor was ill and Frost gave the Norton lectures at Harvard, the Morrisons had a series of receptions for him at their Cambridge house. In July 1938, a few months after Elinor's death in March, Kay, who loved literature, sought Frost out at South Shaftsbury. Realizing his desolation and loneliness, she invited him to join her family and friends at a nearby summer house. According to her daughter, Kay was a very unhappy woman who wanted a career rather than a family. "Incredibly romantic and passionate," she also craved more wildness in her life and more brilliance than Ted could offer. She wanted to help and rescue Frost, who was out of control after Elinor's death and desperately needed both a new secretary and a new source of poetic inspiration. Frost—the same age and with the same first name as her recently deceased father—gave her what she had long been seeking. For the first time in her life, Kay could realize her ambition to achieve status, exert social and literary influence, and share the fame of a great man.

In the summer of 1938 Frost was a white-haired but handsome and vigorous man of sixty-four, Kay a refined and stylish woman of thirty-nine. Frost took a keen interest in the sexual life of his friends but had never slept with any woman but Elinor. Though Elinor's dowdy dress and chronic illness had made her seem much older than Frost, she had been his high school sweetheart, and he had remained faithful (despite many temptations) until her death. Just as Kay associated Frost with her father, so he was drawn to Kay by her similarity to his delicate, auburn-haired mother. Like Belle Frost, Kay had grown up in Scotland and come to America at the age of eleven. To Frost, who had discussed the significance of personal names in "Maple," her name had positive associations. Cathleen was the Celtic heroine of the Yeats play that Frost had put on at Pinkerton Academy; Morrison

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was the New Hampshire Superintendent of Public Instruction who had praised Frost's teaching and advanced his career.

A. B. Guthrie, who was loyal to Ted Morrison and observed Frost that summer at Bread Loaf, said he was "the captive of fierce and aberrant passions." John Ciardi also noted his powerful inner conflict: "Frost was intensely puritanical. I think he had also a very strong sexual impulse, and these two things set up a contest of forces"—in which passion won. His sexual urge, though always strong, had been restrained with Elinor, but he once admitted: "If I had a beautiful studio, I'd never paint. I'd have ladies visiting. . . . Might as well be candid." He dreaded the thought of trouble and a public scandal, and hated the dishonesty of Kay's double life, but frankly told Thompson: "I'm a perfectly normal animal; I can't always behave." He seemed to define his emotional and moral ambiguity in a prophetic letter of June 1937, when he said: "All our ingenuity is lavished on getting into danger legitimately so that we may be genuinely rescued." As Oscar Wilde remarked in *De Profundis*, illicit sex "was like feasting with panthers. The danger was half the excitement."

Frost openly discussed Kay with his close friends as well as with his biographers. He told the ponderous Robert Newdick that for the first time in his life he felt unconstrained, and Newdick wrote that he "needs, wants feminine companionship and friendship, and will have it. Is fearful of arrangement with K. Morrison—for her and Ted, rather than for himself. If he were Ted, he wouldn't permit it." But Kay aroused the old Adam in Frost and tempted him to fall. He was astonished that a woman who behaved so conventionally could be so wild sexually. When she suddenly, almost magically reappeared in his life, he felt: "Here's a lady who's willing, why not let go?" She would be good for him—and for his poetry.

In late July 1938 Frost accepted Kay's invitation, while Ted was away at Bread Loaf, to visit her in central Vermont. Troubled and excited by their long walks in the woods, he took along condoms (which he had been reluctant to use with Elinor). Kay had revered him as a poet for seventeen years and now realized how much he needed and wanted her. He talked brilliantly, describing his family tragedies, and he loved her that she did pity them. One day they came to a place Frost thought sufficiently secluded "for either rape or murder." They sat on the warm earth and talked some more. Then, according to Thompson's unpublished typescript, "Frost began making passionate love to her and found that she was willing. . . . All he had to do was to take off her drawers and consummate an urge that seemed mutual." Frost (to use one of his own favorite metaphors) rode on her own melting. The contrast between Elinor's virginal

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rejection of his first sexual overtures, which had made him feel bestial, and Kay's eager response, which revived and inspired him, was reflected in the placement of "The Subverted Flower" just after "Never Again Would Birds' Song Be the Same" in *A Witness Tree.* Their first, mutually gratifying encounter also provoked a comic quatrain on in- and outdoor fooling. Frost wrote that no one could object to being legally wed when the marriage was consummated naked in bed. But it is an entirely different matter when you have sex out-of-doors with no clothes off but drawers.

Just after they became lovers, Frost proposed marriage and pressed Kay to divorce her husband. She firmly rejected this idea and told him that even if they were both twenty years younger and both free she would never agree to marry him. (Ted later wrote in his essay on the poet: "To marry Robert Frost was no light undertaking for any woman.") Kay felt that divorce was impossible: it would cause scandal and harm the children. She pleaded that their affair be kept secret. During the next few years, Frost strained their relations by forcefully pressing her to marry him. Although he agreed to behave with discretion, he distressed her by telling several close friends about the affair, hinting about it to others, and instructing his biographers to reveal the full story.

Frost confessed to Thompson that his love for Kay contained an element of sadism: "He punished her, and she (according to Frost) permitted him the somewhat brutal pleasure of having sexual intercourse with her. . . . Frost says that his initial love-making was motivated by resentments but that he suddenly found himself in love with Kay, and dependent on his love for her." Frost said he resented Kay for trying to help him, for making him depend on her, and for "mothering" him—as his mother, Belle, and Elinor had done. For many years he continued to punish her—quite irrationally—for sleeping with him, for taking Elinor's place, for refusing to marry him, and for the guilt *he* felt about betraying Ted.

Frost was alternately invigorated, disturbed, grateful, jealous, vindictive, and loving. At first, his love for her revealed new and rather surprising aspects of his character, which seemed very different from his role as faithful husband and genial lecturer. Like Yeats after his late Steinach operation, Frost was passionate, wild, even mad. His old friend Margaret Bartlett (who did not yet know about Kay) saw a rejuvenated man and thought his liberation from Elinor explained his new energy and vigor. In letters to his friends (as in his poems), he struggled between concealment and revelation. Kay had agreed to handle his correspondence and arrange his readings. In early 1939 he jubilantly told Sidney Cox: "My secretary has taken me in hand to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

keep me lecturing and talking as of old. But I am very wild at heart sometimes. Not at all confused. Just wild—wild."

Just after the August session at Bread Loaf, Frost expressed his gratitude to Kay and contrasted her solicitude and Ted's with the callous behavior of President Stanley King of Amherst: "You two rescued me from a very dangerous self when you had the idea of keeping me for the whole season at Bread Loaf. I am still infinitely restless, but I came away from you as good as saved. . . . Stanley King's charge against me was ingratitude. It will be a sensitive subject with me the rest of my life. . . . Tears in my heart when I left you people." Tears in the writer would soon produce tears in the reader. Keenly aware of the difference between his daughter Lesley's cruelty and Kay's kindness, he tried to reassure his possessive and censorious daughter about the woman who had eased his loneliness. "You must be grateful to her for having helped me through my bad time," he wrote in November 1938. "I am best as I am, though the hours alone are sometimes pretty desolate."

In a revealing letter to Untermeyer that same month, Frost connected Kay's soothing voice to the music of his verse, explained that she had relieved his guilt about the treatment of his family and provided the absolution that Elinor had failed to give him. Although Kay was not an innocent girl, he idealized and saw her that way. She seemed perfect for him, and he called on the sympathetic Untermeyer to tell Kay how much he loved her:

> My secretary has soothed my spirit like music in her attendance on me and my affairs. . . . I was thrust out into the desolateness of wondering about my past whether it had not been too cruel to those I had dragged with me and almost to cry out to heaven for a word of reassurance that was not given me in time. Then came this girl stepping innocently into my days to give me something to think of besides dark regrets. . . . You can figure it out for yourself how my status with a girl like her might be the perfect thing for me at my age in my position. I wish in some indirect way she could come to know how I feel toward her.

Frost told one friend that "there have been just two women in my life." But by May 1939, when he saw the poet Raymond Holden in Boston, Kay seemed to have supplanted Elinor. Unlike Kay, who adored Frost, was eager to please him, and was attracted by his fame, Elinor had rejected his sexual overtures, disapproved of his public persona, criticized his self-promoting readings, did nothing to advance his career, condemned his egotism, complained of her sacrifice, and resented his success. Frost considered women "sources of male gratification," but revealed that he was afraid of his powerful

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

passion for Kay. He told Holden, "in his lightest, aphoristic manner that he had had many troublesome feelings about different women, but had loved only one. I do not know why I felt that he was meaning to imply that the one was not Elinor. . . . He once told me that he didn't dare let his emotions be aroused for fear that they would ruin him, so strong were they potentially."

Frost also poured out his heart to his bibliographer Louis Mertins, linking Kay to Belle and stressing her maternal role, crediting her for both saving and inspiring him, and revealing how profoundly his existence was now bound up with hers: "I owe everything in the world to her. She found me in the gutter, hopeless, sick, run down. She bundled me up and carted me to her home and cared for me like a child, sick child. Without her I would today be in my grave. If I have done anything since I came out of the hospital [in January 1940], it is all due to her."

When traveling and separated from Kay, Frost wrote about five hundred letters to her, but she destroyed most of them, cut and tore parts of many others, and only nineteen fragments have survived. He addressed her as Dearest and Milady (a dig at her social pretensions) as well as the classical Venusta, Augusta, Egeria (a woman counselor), and consulatrix (a pun on consoler). The letters expressed his sentimental and romantic as well as his passionate and idealistic feelings. In one undated note he told Kay that the clock in his room had stopped ticking at the very moment she was boarding the train. Since she was the last one to wind it, he would let it remain silent as a token of their love. In a letter written at midnight in mid-October 1938, Frost includes a double entendre on lecturing and sex that sounds like Hemingway, a grateful acknowledgment of her inspiration, and a fervent but unfulfilled hope that she will keep his letters and eventually reveal their love:

> Egeria, You told me to do it well and so it is no brag. . . . I have a weakness *for* you but a strength *from* you. . . . Surely no one could object to love that courses in the inflection of my sentences like impassioned blood in the veins. You must find a place to keep the most earnest [love] words I ever wrote. They can only do you honor when the time comes to divulge them; and meanwhile they could in no way compromise you if discovered by chance. All this says I am yours in a very noble sense.

Four months later, while Frost was writing his love poems to Kay, he again assured her that her inspiration was vital to his work: "The poetry into which my heart would go for you aches at the threat of being denied birth." Ten years later he confirmed that he was still her faithful troubadour: "Ninety-nine percent of the time I am yours and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the Muses' only." Frost also expressed his love by buying rare and expensive first editions of his earliest books as presents for Kay, and by writing an amusing (and punning) poem, which contrasted her conventional wedding ring with the more exotic jewelry (of the sort pupils had noticed on his mother) that he had given her to symbolize their wildness and "sin." Her husband had given her a wedding ring to keep her virtuous. But Frost surpassed him by giving her an earring for erring and a necklace for being wickedly reckless.

But their honeymoon did not last very long, and during the early years of the affair they lurched from crisis to crisis. From December 1938 to January 1939 the Morrisons accompanied Frost on his annual trip to Florida. They spent a week at the Casa Marina Hotel in Key West and a week as guests of the novelist Hervey Allen near Miami. Their close proximity, the need to share Kay with Ted and even defer to her husband, caused constant anxiety and tension. Frost got into petty disputes with Ted, and Kay had trouble separating the antagonists. In February 1939 Frost told Untermeyer that "my chief signs of life are shown in any debate *with my rival.*" Writing from Florida that same month he suggested, in a letter to Lesley, that they had come close to an explosion and that he was, as always, terribly lonely whenever Kay left him: "I came through the two weeks with the Morrisons pretty well considering all there was on all sides to dissemble. I am alone now in a rather desolated house. . . . My entanglement has had critical moments when it looked near openly declared trouble." After this anguished holiday, Frost would never allow Ted to come to Florida. Ted would remain at home, while Kay traveled south with Frost.

In early February 1939, to distract himself from Kay, Frost went to Cuba for five days with the poet Paul Engle. He told Lesley that he admired the tropical scenery and was thrilled by his first flight in an airplane, which "made a high sky" in one leap. Suddenly he found himself exiled on a strange island among loud but unintelligible speakers: "We went down to Camaguey, saw several cities besides Havana and plenty of sugar cane and royal palms. The land is rich; the people miserably poor. Everywhere beggars and beggar-vendors. We saw one great beach to beat the world . . . [with] the most transparent ocean water I have ever looked into. . . . I am not much on foreign parts. I favor that beach for you to resort to someday though. To me the best of the excursion was the flight both ways in the big Pan American plane and especially the swoop and mighty splash into the bays on arrival."

A second and more serious crisis erupted in the spring of 1939 when Frost and the Morrisons spent the night at Untermeyer's farm

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in Elizabethtown, New York. Frost had told Untermeyer that jealousy alone gave him the sense of being physically and emotionally held. Whenever he was locked into a triangle with Kay and Ted, he found it very difficult to maintain the pretense of innocence. At Untermeyer's house, Ted assumed the role of husband and slept with Kay in the only double guest bed. Frost felt rejected, became deranged, and almost dared to force the moment to its crisis.

Frost continued to put pressure on Kay and thought she would eventually agree to marry him. When she remained loyal (after her fashion) to Ted and her children, the jealous Frost, driven to extremes of behavior by the confrontations in Florida and Elizabethtown, went dangerously out of control. Thompson, accepting Lesley's view of her father and certainly exaggerating his condition (for Frost never lost touch with reality), recorded: "During the summer of 1939, in Ripton, and then during February 1940 in Key West, I saw Frost come very close to the verge of insanity. He was a wild man, he was frantic; he was deeply upset, he was just plain 'crazy' in some of his actions."

The situation became more tangled by Frost's illness in early 1940. "I have been very sick," he told Cox, "largely we now think from some very drastic medicine that doctors tried on me for cystitis. I went crazy with it one night alone and broke chairs ad lib till a friend [Dr. Merrill Moore] happened in to save me." Moore thought Frost's voice sounded strange on the telephone, rushed over to his apartment, found him almost unconscious, and took him to the hospital.

Frost had had hemorrhoids for years but refused to see a doctor until his kidneys became inflamed and he was overcome by pain. The operation for "asteroids" took place in Boston on January 10. On February 1, Kay took him down to Key West and nursed him back to health. While there, she shrewdly wrote Thompson that whenever Frost was in a crisis he either bought land or took to his bed. In Florida he had used Kay "as a kind of safety valve" to release his frustration, anger, and pain, and she had just been through the hardest two weeks of her life. Thompson suggested that Lesley visit Frost. But Kay, knowing the terrible effect the daughter had on the father, said that Lesley "would defeat anything the doctors could do" to help him. Thompson, rather than Lesley, finally took over as servant and nurse-companion. He told Kay that Frost was pathetically dependent on her letters and used his illness to exert power over his friends. In Florida he "ate his heart out . . . watching, between your many letters, for *more* letters. . . . He said, 'If I don't hear from her tomorrow, you're going to have your patient back in bed,' and he tried to smile while his eyes filled with tears and his lips quivered."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

III

Despite frequent crises—when Frost became a possessive, jealous, and demanding lover, and the unpleasant truth threatened to burst out—he and the Morrisons tried hard to preserve appearances. After a few years of distressing emotional upheavals, they eventually contrived a serviceable mode of existence and settled on a formula of transparent lies that seemed acceptable to all parties. In order to protect herself and preserve the status quo, Kay tried to placate and control Frost by telling him that she no longer had sexual relations with Ted. At the same time she assured Ted that her relations with Frost were purely secretarial. But Kay's insistent denials, to friends as well as to her husband, seemed to call Frost's manliness into question and he responded by indiscreetly boasting about his conquest. "Trying to prove himself 'a bad, bad man,'" Kay wrote, while trying to conceal the truth, "he laced his conversations with innuendoes of sexual exploits that were utterly foreign to his nature." But Frost's innuendoes were also a form of flirtation and seduction and tried to suggest, to Kay and to others, "what a devil I am!"

Torn between a wish to preserve secrecy and a desire to achieve eventual recognition for her crucial role in Frost's life, Kay boldly retaliated by declaring that he was merely a vain, boastful old man. In a characteristic letter to the wealthy businessman and Frost-collector Earle Bernheimer, Kay tried to quell the gossip by insisting that she was devoted to her family and was merely trying to be kind to Frost, who liked to indulge in sexual fantasies:

> My friends know what I am doing for Robert and have backed me in my wish not to make him too unhappy and to give him care and affection while he lives. I am well settled with my husband and children and they know they are my first care. What I do for Robert is something different. He is devoted to me and sometimes is carried away in his talk beyond fact because he is emotionally upset and lonely and because he would have things different.

Kay gave the same story to Richard Wilbur, who accepted her account and later wrote: "No doubt Frost was enamored and possessive of her, and tried her good husband's patience; but she told me once that there had never been an 'affair' between her and Robert, and I believed her. When Frost 'let on' to the contrary, as he sometimes did, I think it was an old man's vanity talking."

According to Thompson (who knew the truth), Ted forced himself to believe everything Kay told him in order to preserve his sanity. But Frost found it more difficult to accept her transparent but necessary falsehoods. He "accused Kay of betraying their love, through the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

act of denying their love, and of pretending that it never was [sexual love]. It's lucky for her that Frost has been willing to deceive himself by accepting as truths so many of Kay's deceptions."

Frost's relations with Kay were complicated by her contemporaneous involvement with at least three other men. Stafford Dragon (the name itself was irresistible) was Frost's lively and handsome hired man on the Vermont farm. Visiting writers familiar with the sexual situation at Bread Loaf (where Stafford's father sang ballads) joked about her social pretensions and knowingly referred to "Stafford-the-man-Kay-hires as 'Lady Chatterley's Lover.'" When Thompson urged Dragon to behave more discreetly, Dragon told him that he knew Thompson was also Kay's lover.

Kay had been sleeping with Ted's "best friend," the married writer Bernard De Voto. The short, porcine "Bennyvenuto" (as Frost called him) had thick glasses, thick lips, and a broad flat Babe Ruth nose with tunnel-like nostrils. Born in Ogden, Utah, of Catholic-Mormon parents, a year before Kay, De Voto had graduated from Harvard in 1920 and returned to his home state to begin his career as a novelist. He came back to Harvard in 1930 but, not eligible for tenure without a doctorate, taught for six years on a temporary appointment. When he failed to get a permanent job, the embittered De Voto consulted Frost and then resigned to become editor of the *Saturday Review of Literature*. He had met Frost in Florida in 1936 and thought of writing his biography. He looked after Frost when he gave the Norton lectures and supported him when left-wing critics attacked *A Further Range*. In a vituperative but critically weak defense, De Voto exclaimed that R. P. Blackmur's "piece in the *Nation* may not quite be the most idiotic review our generation has produced, but in twenty years of reading criticism—oh, the hell with scholarly reservations, Mr. Blackmur's is the most idiotic of our time."

Thompson, an on-the-spot observer, noted the mutual recrimination and entangled moral issues: "Kay had described [De Voto's] innocence as impotence. Kay had been involved in his harem by Benny, very early. So when Frost moved into the picture, with Kay, Benny had become jealous. He had accused Frost of breaking up—not Benny's harem but the Morrison marriage." De Voto's frequently quoted but little understood condemnation of Frost at the Bread Loaf Conference in August 1938—"You're a good poet, Robert, but you're a bad man"—referred to Frost's relations with Kay. De Voto thought it was morally acceptable to sleep with Kay as long as he did not try to take her away from Ted. But when Frost proposed marriage to Kay, De Voto got on his moral high horse and expressed disapproval of Frost's attempt to break up Ted's marriage.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The third member of Kay's sexual ménage was the ubiquitous and "incredibly attractive" Lawrance Thompson. Eight years younger than Kay, he also maintained the necessary façade and helped her to look after Frost. Thompson's intimacy with Kay allowed him to participate in and even change the course of the life he was writing. During the Florida crisis of February–March 1940, which followed Frost's hemorrhoid operation, he secretly advised Kay to reject Frost's persistent proposals and even suggested a way to escape from his clutches. In another letter of March 3, he told Kay to protect herself from Frost's emotional onslaughts by being tough with him and by using (Elinor-like) silences to express her anger:

> (1) He has thrown the whole weight of his life on you, and has no freedom apart from you; (2) if, for his own sake, a substitution were made, the only substitute must be some woman whose unrestricted freedom to devote herself to him would or could attract him. . . .
>
> It takes your kind of commonsense plus a little ruthlessness (which you might borrow from Robert himself) to deal with Robert almost harshly. . . . Don't you worry too much about his *nerves*; worry more about your own. He has 'em plenty, but he isn't in danger of being killed by them—unless this present conflict becomes a "war of attrition." And don't let him bully or threaten; you bully and threaten with your silences instead.

Kay, who feared he knew too much, remained friendly to Thompson, but he finally became exasperated with her. Their relations became tense in January 1945 when he summoned her to New York. Her eight-year-old daughter Anne, who was also fond of Thompson, thought he might be getting married. Kay frowned at her suggestion, got upset, and said, very stiffly, "No, it couldn't be!" When she discovered the truth, she became jealous of his wife. In his "Notes on Frost," Thompson complained that Kay treated his family (who also spent the summers near Frost's cabin in Vermont) like "poor relations." She never concealed her dislike and was "bitchy" to his wife, Janet, his children, and himself.

Thompson often replaced Kay (both before and after his marriage) as Frost's companion, keeper, and body servant, and he knew what she had to endure when Frost was in a bad mood. In September 1945 he criticized Frost's behavior, praised her forbearance, and praised her for the way she handled him: "I admire you deeply for the longsuffering patience with which you've accepted his self-indulgence when it comes to asking more of your time and strength and life than he has a right to ask. . . . You've done a superb job under the most exasperating conditions, and I respect all your decisions and actions in all the difficult task of walking a tight-rope during all these emotional hurricanes and thunderstorms of his."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

These dangerous, even treacherous, letters strengthened the bond between Thompson and Kay (since there was no one else she could turn to in this way), but they also gave her considerable power over him. If she had ever shown them to Frost, Thompson would have been cast into the outer darkness and his biography instantly terminated. The handsome Thompson also had an emotional hold over Kay, who was in love with him and helped him because they were lovers. He had to remain on good terms with her through all the *Sturm und Drang*. If she became Frost's literary executor and disliked what Thompson wrote (and wrote about her) in his biography, she could withhold permission to quote from Frost's works. If Thompson wanted Kay to remain a vital ally, he would not only have to take her side, rather than Frost's, during the recurrent emotional crises, but would also have to conceal her relations with Frost.

Frost agreed to maintain the deception during his lifetime, but he created another tense conflict by insisting the truth be told after his death. He believed the full story of his relations with Kay was essential to an understanding of his life and work and hated to have his passion for her belittled or demeaned. He believed, as he had written in "Birches," that "Earth's the right place for love," and warned Thompson: "Don't let it be confused with anything so pale as platonic." Frost realized that Kay would be opposed to any revelations about their affair (and for this reason did not appoint her his literary executor). But he believed that she should not be allowed to conceal the importance of their sexual relationship—even if the revelation hurt her: "He thought there were certain penalties which Kay had to pay for intimacy, and one of them was to have the story told." When he asked how widely the story was known, Thompson replied that many of the writers at Bread Loaf (Ted, De Voto, Guthrie, and Ciardi) suspected they were having an affair and others (Untermeyer, Hervey Allen, Bernheimer, and Thompson) knew because Frost had told them about it. Frost felt so strongly about this matter that he threatened to leave the beloved farm at Ripton to Lesley if Kay did not permit Thompson to tell the whole story.

But Thompson (unlike most biographers, who struggle with the family to reveal rather than conceal the truth) did not agree and was bound by Kay's rather than by Frost's wishes after his death. He twisted Frost's desire for revelation into a supposed wish "to glamorize and dramatize the story, so that he and Kay Morrison as lovers would somehow seem noble and dignified in their ways of pretending that Ted Morrison blocked them off from fulfilling their romance." Thompson died in 1973, and when the third volume was completed by R. H. Winnick three years later, Kay and Ted (who were very much

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

alive) gutted the volume before publication by excising all traces of her intimacy with Frost.

Kay and her four lovers followed their instincts and their passions, pursuing their own interests and behaving in a selfish but understandable manner. Ted's situation was more difficult, his response more enigmatic. He could not get away from Frost, either in Cambridge or Vermont, and visitors sometimes confused him with Frost—even in his own house. During meals at the Ripton farm, Thompson noted, "Kay always sits farthest from the kitchen, which means that Ted, nearest the kitchen, always does the hopping and fetching." Though Ted *seemed* to accept the situation, several close friends—De Voto, Ciardi, and Guthrie—expressed anger on his behalf and intensified his pain.

Friends never saw the tight-lipped, courtly Ted show any rage or resentment. He found it hard to reach his own emotions and tried to deny the reality of the situation. He did not express physical affection, even with his children, but he too had human feelings and was furious underneath. His daughter Anne still remembers terrible fights at home when she was a little girl. Ted, who was usually so gentle, terrified Anne by radiating anger, storming out of the house, and slamming the door. After drinking a great deal at a party, Ted once admitted to Richard Wilbur: "I hate the position I'm in. I never want Robert to be in my house." The year after Frost's death, Ted, almost apologetically, told Thompson: "Well, let's face it: I didn't like him."

Ted was willing to put up with anything as long as his marriage *seemed* to be happy. Despite Kay's affair with Frost, Ted still loved her, continued to sleep with her, and felt he was achieving a higher good by his personal sacrifice. A somewhat bloodless character, he had a low sex drive, was used to his wife's infidelities, and would have done anything to avoid publicly accusing Kay of adultery and going through a scandalous divorce. Though his acceptance of Kay's lovers was personally humiliating, Ted thought it was worth the sacrifice not only to preserve his marriage, but also to sustain Frost and enable *Frost* (if not himself) to write great poems. Ted also endured the situation and went to great lengths to protect Kay. His tolerance enabled him to be the "better" person and do the noble thing.

All these New England puritans had been brought up to maintain superficial propriety—no matter what passions thrashed beneath the surface. The suppression of emotions, the preservation of decorum, the denial of intolerable reality, were all intensely Jamesian. The lies hurt everyone concerned, but all the players gained something valuable by accepting them. Family, friends, and lovers all learned the Lesson of the Master and realized that they had to be sacrificed for Art.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Frost's, Thompson's, and Anne Morrison Smyth's view of the poet's relations with Kay were inevitably quite different. Frost thought his love was paramount and that he and Kay had made the greatest sacrifice by not marrying. He felt Kay was torn apart and suffered greatly, believed they were "caught in an awkward situation, and acted as honorably and as nobly as love would permit them to act. . . . The cost to both of them had been heavy, [and] had even been injurious to Kay's emotional and spiritual and physical health." Thompson disliked Frost intensely and saw the affair in a negative light. Though in no position to judge others, he declared: "The more evidence I find on the story, the more unpleasant and shameful the 'romance' becomes."

Anne, remembering all the quarrels and lies, did not think that Kay had made a noble choice. By attracting men and forming several attachments, she used marriage for her own convenience and was both disloyal to Frost and "rotten about Ted." Entering middle age but filled with romantic longing, Kay (I believe) felt great power by manipulating a number of distinguished men while assuring her place in literary history. The great irony, according to Anne, was that Kay told her she had never experienced sexual satisfaction with anyone. Sexually unfulfilled, she lived vicariously through Frost (Anne thought) and caused great pain to everyone connected to her.

IV

Kay became Frost's secretary and manager in September 1938. He paid her an annual salary (which reached $2,000 in 1954 and rose to $3,000 in the early 1960s), and she was supposed to work at his home—first in Beacon Hill and then in Cambridge—from 9:30 to 4:00 on weekdays. Kay typed, edited, read proofs, answered the mail, kept files, scheduled the readings, made the travel arrangements, managed the money, paid the bills, furnished his flats and houses, drove him around, advised him about family problems, entertained guests, protected him from unannounced visitors and often from himself. She fussed over Frost, was solicitous about his food, and made sure he did not get too tired. She even cleaned up when his puppy soiled the rug. But he demanded even more from her, and she had to be entirely at his disposal. "I could be summoned after hours," Kay wrote, "on Saturdays and Sundays, on holidays, sometimes finding real problems but more often emotional upsets." This, of course, put an additional strain on her family. As Kay told Thompson in February 1940: "He cannot be alone any more and it is impossible to promise steady companionship."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Frost soon became completely dependent on Kay and resented the power she exerted. Their intimacy allowed Kay to nag him and Frost to vent his anger. She could be as stern and exasperated as a schoolmarm, and many friends were irritated by the way she guarded him. Though he admitted that women—such as his mother and Elinor—had always run his life, he called Kay a very severe disciplinarian. She would ask, "What's wrong with you?" whenever she wanted to bring him "out into the open for a hunt." Since she took dictation, he called himself her "Easy Dictator," but he could also be a temperamental and difficult tyrant. Kay complained to Thompson about Frost's unremitting demands and his desire to dictate every aspect of her life. Frost wants "complete control of a person," she wrote in 1940. "More and more he tells me what to think and say."

For emotional and practical reasons, the lonely and jealous Frost wanted to be with her all the time. When she left him after their annual trip to Florida, he called her his "chronic deserter" and (in a passage deleted from the published letter) hinted to Earle Bernheimer of his conquest and desire to pursue her. After three weeks of the most perfect bliss, he said, Kay had deserted him to return to Cambridge. The weather (though not his emotional life) was still perfect, and he had great difficulty controlling his impulse to follow her north. When Frost could not have his way, he sometimes regressed to infantile behavior. In December 1946, when Kay made plans to spend New Year's Eve with friends, Frost retaliated by pretending he had invited some cronies for a party of his own. He upset the furniture, filled the room with cigar smoke, spilled whiskey on the table, broke glasses on the carpet, and scattered the remains of crackers and cheese. After discovering the mess the next morning, Kay immediately saw through his ruse but could not summon up much pity for the lonely celebrator.

Frost's possessiveness lasted until the very end of his life. In 1962 Kay again complained to Thompson that "Frost had been so jealous, during the past year, that he had made it impossible for her to go on any trips with Ted" during his sabbatical. The only way she could ever escape from Frost was by refusing, despite his urgent pleas, to accompany him on foreign trips. She desperately needed a rest from him and did not want to assume an even greater burden by becoming his traveling companion, so she let the eager Thompson take her place. Daily proximity had cooled their passion and led to frequent quarrels. She once got so exasperated that she threw a bucket of cold water over Frost. When the strain became too great she would explode, resign her job, and take to her bed. But there would always be a tender reconciliation.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The ferocious Lesley, whose very appearance was enough to send Frost straight to bed, and who was as jealous of Kay as she had been of her mother and sisters, intensified the turmoil. Of the two, Lesley (a year younger) was more lively and attractive, Kay more intelligent and sophisticated. Each had two children. But Kay had graduated from Bryn Mawr and was married to a teacher at Harvard, while Lesley had dropped out of college and was divorced.

Lesley's hatred of Kay was fueled by her profound resentment of her father. She was grateful that she did not have to do Kay's job and take care of Frost, but she also looked for things "to get Kay on." Lesley saw Kay as an "intruder" who had taken her place in Frost's life and was severely moralistic about her sexual infidelity. She feared that Kay might get her share of Frost's increasingly valuable estate and condemned her, Thompson wrote, as "a scheming, money-grubbing crook." Lesley was especially enraged by Frost's love poem to Kay, "The Silken Tent." Though it was written in August–September 1938, soon after Frost met Kay, Lesley insisted he had composed it "way back in her mother's day" and wanted to engrave the opening line, "She is as in a field a silken tent," on Elinor's gravestone. Frost tried to mollify Lesley in December 1938 by gently encouraging her "to be grateful to Kathleen for her ministrations. The closest criticism will discover no flaw in her kindness to me." But Lesley remained adamantly bitter and even referred to Kay as "the whore."

Donald Hall, Frost's friend and protégé, took (like most others) a benign view of Kay and admired her devotion as well as her defiance: "Kay Morrison was devoted and worked hard and was tolerant although I think she had much reason for impatience. Robert came first. She was concerned for Frost: to protect him, to please him. One did not feel that anybody else in the room had the importance that Frost did, and certainly Frost wanted it that way. . . . Many people were frightened of him. Day in, day out, Kay may have done more standing up to him than anybody else." Thompson saw only base, even mercenary motives. Ignoring her devotion, he emphasized her high salary, gifts of money and property, and the Morgan horses Frost bought for Kay and her daughter. Although he himself had greatly benefited from his association with Frost, Thompson also declared that Frost "satisfied Kay's grotesque fondness for lion-hunting and for name-dropping." John Ciardi, who disapproved of Frost's liaison with Kay, resented both Kay's power over Frost and her malign influence on Frost's friendships:

> It was almost impossible to spend time with Frost apart from the Morrisons. . . . Kay had a mind that naturally spun intricate webs. It is quite

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

possible that I came to see Frost in considerable part through her machinations. They were more intricate than evil . . . but they may have influenced me more than I know in my views of Robert.

I was already aware that he was a literary politician in ways I found personally distasteful. . . . If I have been swayed to look for something like evil in Robert, it may have been Kay's hissing that I heard. I do believe he was self-centered—enough so, I believe, to have been a disastrous father. . . . I believe she might have stewed [my innocent remark] in witches' brew for a year before letting me know she had taken the hex off it.

As Kay's children grew older, Frost became an avuncular figure in their household. Since Kay was, in any case, "not a very maternal type," the children did not mind all the attention she paid to him and came to adore the benign old gentleman. Frost, for his part, was fond of Bobby and Anne, who were the same age as his grandchildren. He wrote them charming letters, taught them to memorize poems, gave them money and presents, encouraged them to be rebellious, and took a keen interest in their schoolwork.

When Anne's horse got sick and she had to inject it every four hours throughout the night, she told Frost that she had to get some sleep between the treatments and could not stay up to talk to him. Nevertheless, he appeared at the farmhouse at ten at night and talked away, as usual, until two in the morning. Still fearing the dark in old age, he thought Anne would also be afraid to walk to the barn alone in the middle of the night. His impulse was both selfish and kind: he would not let her sleep, but he stayed up to accompany her to the barn.

Tragedy struck the Morrisons in December 1954 when the twenty-four-year-old, recently married Bobby, like his grandfather before him, was killed in an automobile accident. During a skiing trip at Stowe, while taking chains off a tire at the edge of the road, he was hit by a car driven by a sixteen-year-old French-Canadian boy. Since the weather was exceptionally beautiful, Frost said, in a Hemingway-like phrase: "It's a bad day to be dead." But he was so upset that Kay had to calm *him* down. Anne, the first to hear the tragic news, had to break it to her parents and always felt she had "not done it properly." To comfort her, Frost talked about the deaths in his family and assured her that one somehow survives every tragedy. Although his therapeutic comfort helped Anne while she was still in a state of shock, she also—like Kay—felt overwhelmed by *his* grief.

Anne, who grew up idolizing Ted and hating Kay, saw enough affectionate gestures between Frost and Kay (there was no public display between Ted and Kay) to know the truth. When Ted drove them up to Vermont, she would ride in the back with his dog Gillie and watch Frost, seated next to Kay, with his arm around her. Anne

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

knew what was happening but, unwilling to choose between Frost and Ted, or to hurt either of them, she followed the repressive Jamesian rules and "crafted denial." They never talked about the real situation or expressed their true feelings.

When Kay's book was published in 1974, she and Ted were apprehensive that reviewers might allude to Kay's real relationship with Frost. They sat down with the thirty-seven-year-old Anne and assured her that Kay and Frost had never had a love affair. She knew they were lying. They wanted to protect her, but they also wanted her to continue to keep the secret. Frost's oft-quoted but little understood couplet in *A Witness Tree* opposes speculation against knowledge and suggests how the truth remained hidden: "We dance round in a ring and suppose, / But the Secret sits in the middle and knows."

Anne, still bitter about some aspects of her childhood, feels that Kay hurt other people because she had been hurt by her father. She hurt Ted by her affairs with Frost and other men; she hurt Frost by refusing to leave Ted and by making him jealous of his rivals; she hurt her children (Bobby even more than Anne, for he was older and "saw the craziness more clearly") by her betrayal and her lies.

But Kay's behavior also had some positive aspects. She rescued Frost from emotional chaos, enabled him to write, and inspired some of his finest poems. She greatly enhanced the children's lives by making Frost a member of their household. Ted cooperated in her effort to keep the family together. They preserved appearances and convinced almost everyone that they had a happy life. Kay managed, somehow, to hold things together when they constantly threatened to break apart.

V

The full story of Frost's relations with Kay finally reveals—as he intended—the real meaning of *A Witness Tree.* The book, published on April 23, 1942 (four months after America entered the war), was dedicated, not to Kay and Ted, but: "to K. M. for her part in it." Though rejected by the Literary Guild and the Book-of-the-Month Club, it sold 10,000 copies in the first eight weeks and won Frost's fourth Pulitzer Prize. Since few readers knew about Kay or expected to find sexual passion in Frost's poetry, the revelation of his love went unnoticed. In typically obtuse reviews, the *Booklist* spoke of "characteristically quiet poems with little emotional stress," and the innocent *Catholic World* exclaimed: "Here again are honestly beautiful nature poems."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Though the sexual imagery in these love poems is as powerful as Dylan Thomas's "force that through the green fuse drives the flower," the poetry gains in strength by its more subtle expression of emotion. With characteristic elusiveness, Frost declared that metaphor is the divinely appointed way of writing one thing when you mean another, instead of clearly stating what you mean. As the poet James Dickey observed: "He's able to say the most amazing things without seeming to raise his voice."

In May 1943, Frost acknowledged Kay's inspiration in a letter to his editor William Sloane: "you can find internal evidence in the book itself that but for her there would have been no seventh book. . . . [I] couldn't have been induced to do anything except with something far better than tact. . . . The dedication of the book is no ordinary acknowledgment." A witness tree, which is called "deeply wounded" in the opening poem, "Beech," is a tree trunk and iron stake that mark the boundary of a piece of country property. The signature at the bottom of "Beech," "The Moodie Forester," refers to Frost's temperament as well as to his mother's maiden name. It links Kay to both mother and son, and testifies (or witnesses) that he will respect the boundaries of their love. The first section of the book, "One or Two," takes up the question of whether Frost will be alone or joined with Kay. It includes the fourteen best poems in the book—from "The Silken Tent" to "The Discovery of the Madeiras"—all of which express, directly or indirectly, his love for Kay. Frost also makes several affectionate but subtle allusions to Kay in *A Masque of Reason* (1945), the book that followed *A Witness Tree.* In this work the enchanting Kay appears as Job's wife, Thyatira, and is named for a city famous for its witches. Thyatira is beautiful, she does not try to be Platonic, and she has a past that won't bear looking into. She also, like Kay with Frost, falls asleep whenever Job tries to read to her and always claims she hasn't been asleep.

"The Silken Tent," which opens the love sequence in *A Witness Tree,* is a perfect example of Plato's concept of the horse and charioteer, of passion restrained by art. The original title of this intensely personal poem was "In Praise of Your Poise." Reuben Brower points out that "as the first poem of his eightieth birthday selection, *Aforesaid,* Frost printed 'The Silken Tent,' where it takes the place of 'The Pasture,' the dedicatory poem [to Elinor] of several earlier volumes." This sonnet, written in a single sentence and dominated by a single metaphor, was inspired by the sensual imagery of the Song of Solomon—"I am . . . comely . . . as the tents of Kedar" (1:5)—an exotic contrast to the stony harshness of rural New England, and by the seductive invitation in John Donne's "The Baite":

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Come live with mee and bee my love,
And we will some new pleasures prove
Of golden sands, and christall brookes,
With *silken lines*, and silver hookes.

In Frost's poem the beloved woman is compared to a silken tent in a field when the summer breeze—an allusion to the "correspondent breeze" of the Romantic poets, which represents inspiration and creative power—has dried the dew on its ropes so that it sways gently in "guys" (a triple pun on ropes, mockery, and men). Its masculine cedar pole (a hint of the aromatic cedars of Lebanon) shoots upward toward heaven, symbolizing the sureness of the soul. Though not strictly held by any single cord, the feminine tent, supported by the masculine pole, is loosely bound by countless silken ties of love. Only when the ropes become taut as the summer air becomes capricious (another pun on the lady's whimsy and the man's goatish lust) is the tent made aware of the slightest bondage.

This love poem describes, with the greatest possible delicacy, the conflict between Kay's bondage and freedom as she is pulled, loosely by Ted in marriage or tightly by Frost in love, but remains "strictly held by none." The "silken ties" refer to her lovemaking, not to her marriage, and suggest (as Frost wrote in "Not Quite Social"): "You have me there, but loosely, as I would be held." Her daughter said Kay was "ecstatic" about this tribute and agreed that the poem described the two men and two ties of love that pulled Kay in different directions.

"All Revelation," which follows "The Silken Tent," refers back to "the agitated heart" in Frost's early poem "Revelation." "All Revelation" describes sexual intercourse and the revelation or insight that comes from that experience. This act is repeated metaphorically (and rather awkwardly) in the third stanza as the male cathode ray enters the concave geode. Eyes gazing at eyes, as the man and woman make love, seem to bring out the stars and the flowers, concentrate the earth and the sky, and make them feel, through their union, a part of both earthly nature and the heavenly cosmos.

"The Most of It," in "One or Two," which describes Frost's longing for and response to Kay, harks back to "Two Look at Two," in which the tame buck and doe encounter the lovers (based on Frost and Elinor). In the later poem the man seems alone and finds nothing but a mocking echo in answer to his call for companionship. When he calls out to life, he wants an "original" (that is, a novel and also elemental, primitive, and even godlike) response. His cry is answered by an embodiment of sexual power, when a great buck suddenly

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

appears on the opposite cliff and swims across the lake. He walks with horny tread, penetrates the brush, and creates an orgasmic waterfall so that his mate can make The Most of It. Frost had identified with a buck as early as July 1921, when he told Raymond Holden that he would soon be crashing through the woods in his direction.

"Never Again Would Birds' Song Be the Same," which appears between "The Most of It" and "The Subverted Flower," is (Frost said) an "old-fashioned praise poem about a lady's voice" that his audience would "have to like whether you like it or not." In this sonnet the birds in Eden recognize Eve's sound of sense and grasp her tone of meaning without understanding her actual words. Her soft eloquence influences the birds so profoundly that their song permanently changes and will never again be the same: "And to do that to birds was why she came." Emphasizing the bold sexual pun on the final word, Frost suggests that, just as the lady's voice intensified the birds' song, so Kay's sexual passion inspired the words that made this poem.

The long narrative poem in couplets that concludes this section, partly based on a story in Richard Hakluyt's *Voyages* (1600), is so puzzling and uncharacteristic that Brower, Richard Poirier, and William Pritchard, who have all written well about Frost, do not even mention it. The narrative describes two contrasting women. One is a weak, silent, and unresponsive lady, stolen and brought aboard ship by her lover and then left with him on the Atlantic island of Madeira, where she dies of a weak heart. The other is a passionate black slave, who kisses her lover, "drinks" his breath, and is overwhelmed by sexual desire. When she becomes infected by her lover's dangerous fever, they are bound naked, face to face, and thrown overboard in a funereal wedding. One woman shrinks from life; the other sacrifices herself for love.

In February 1938, the month before Elinor died, Frost alluded to the metaphysical image in "Two Tramps in Mudtime" and took a characteristically anti-Platonic stance. He told a poet friend that he was philosophically opposed to having one "Iseult" for his vocation (poetry) and another for his avocation (sexual love). His aim was to write—as he did with Kay—about the real and the ideal in one woman. In "The Discovery of the Madeiras," the "stolen lady" symbolizes Tristan's theft of Iseult; the feverish bound slave girl represents Iseult's fatal passion. The pale, thoughtful lady was based on Elinor; the dark lady was based on Kay. In this poem Frost revealed how Kay had supplanted Elinor.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Workshop

RHINA P. ESPAILLAT

"Where have you been," says my old friend the poet,
"and what have you been doing?" The question
weighs and measures me like an unpaid bill,
hangs in the air, waiting for some remittance.

Well, I've been coring apples, layering them
in raisins and brown sugar; I've been finding
what's always lost, mending and brushing,
pruning houseplants, remembering birthdays.

The wisdom of others thunders past me
like sonic booming; what I know of the world
fits easily in the palm of one hand
and lies quietly there, like a child's cheek.

Spoon-fed to me each evening, history
puts on my children's faces, because they
are the one alphabet all of me reads.
I've been setting the table for the dead,

rehearsing the absence of the living,
seasoning age with names for the unborn.
I've been putting a life together, like
supper, like a poem, with what I have.

✪ RHINA P. ESPAILLAT is the author of *Lapsing to Grace,* a collection of poems with line drawings published by Bennett & Kitchel. Several of her poems are included in the anthologies *In Other Words: Literature by Latinas of the U.S.* (Arte Publico Press) and *A Formal Feeling Comes: Poems in Form by Contemporary Women* (Story Line Press).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The New Cavafy

Unfinished Poems 1918–1932

G. W. BOWERSOCK

In the summer of 1932, when death drew near to Constantine Cavafy, who was already recognized as one of the greatest Greek poets of the age, his friends in Alexandria persuaded him to go to Athens for treatment of a throat cancer only recently diagnosed. His arrival in Athens attracted the notice of many of the notable and not-so-notable literary figures in the city. Several of those who met him there wasted no time in revealing what they had learned, even though after a tracheotomy Cavafy was no longer able to speak at all. His last observations had to be transmitted by way of penciled notes. He returned to Alexandria in October of 1932 and died there the following April. It was not long before the world became aware that the poet had left behind a substantial number of unfinished poems.

In the year of his death one interlocutor at Athens published an article reporting that Cavafy had declared to his friends, only six months before he died (and therefore just before his return to Egypt), that he had still to complete no less than twenty-five poems. A decade later another interlocutor, who had been engaged in compiling the poet's bibliography in 1932, wrote that Cavafy had insisted at the time that the bibliography was far from exhaustive. Clearly time was closing in, and Cavafy did not want to leave the world without a full representation of his achievement. But at the same time he was unwilling, even as he was dying, to sacrifice those lofty standards that had kept him throughout his life from releasing certain works and had in fact repeatedly driven him to revise older pieces.

It was in 1963 that George Savidis announced that the poet's archive, now in his personal possession, contained the sketches of the twenty-five unfinished poems. No poet has ever been more fortunate in the custodian of his memory than Cavafy. Savidis, through an

✪ G. W. BOWERSOCK, Professor of Historical Studies at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, is author of *Fiction as History from Nero to Julian, Studies on the Eastern Roman Empire,* and *Martyrdom and Rome.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

unselfish commitment that exemplified the humanity of this scholar, assured over the years that the Cavafy archive would be made available only to those whose skills and integrity would guarantee an authoritative publication of what survived. He entrusted the unfinished poems to a meticulous philologist from the Institute for Modern Greek studies in Palermo. Renata Lavagnini, daughter of a distinguished Byzantinist and herself a dedicated scholar of Cavafy, has now produced in a single volume, a little more than a year ago, the poems to which Cavafy had alluded in Athens. Her research on the Cavafy drafts, including some nearly illegible scraps, has turned up a grand total of thirty poems on which the poet was at work between 1918 and 1932. Her magisterial publication stands as a fitting memorial to George Savidis, who died last year.

For everyone who cares about Cavafy's poetry or indeed about lyric poetry generally in the twentieth century, the "new Cavafy" must arouse tremendous excitement. One can only regret that some of the writers—E. M. Forster, W. H. Auden, Marguerite Yourcenar, Philip Sherrard—who so successfully advocated Cavafy's work to Western readers are no longer here to taste the pleasure of this moment. But we can be grateful that Cavafy's finest translator and most acute critic, Edmund Keeley, is very much with us, and it will be to him that we must ultimately turn for the definitive English rendering of the new poems.

During the decade of the 1980s, while she was at work on the archive, the editor made known thirteen of the thirty unfinished poems in provisional publications. Seven of these were on Byzantine themes, and four on Julian the Apostate. I was privileged to work with Lavagnini, at the initiative of George Savidis, on a first interpretation of the Julian pieces in 1981. Savidis himself published the text of two of the thirty poems and established the definitive designation for all of them as *atelê* (unfinished) in contrast with another group, now familiar to all readers of Cavafy—the *anekdota* (unpublished in the poet's lifetime). Now that we can examine all thirty unfinished poems together we can readily agree with their editor when she describes them as a coherent corpus. They are confined to recognizable Cavafian themes and often illuminate one another. They enrich our understanding of the entire published oeuvre of the poet. Nine of the poems are concerned with personal, often overtly erotic, subjects, while twenty-one are historical in character (although the personal and erotic elements are present there as well). These poems show, like those already in the public domain, that the triadic distinction that Cavafy once discerned in his work (sensual, historical, and philosophical) collapsed in later years. Eroticism nourished his philosophi-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cal view of history (in the Gibbonian sense of history as told by a *philosophe*), and history, in turn, nourished his eroticism.

Cavafy was undoubtedly one of the most historically minded poets of modern times. He read extensively in works of historical scholarship in Greek, English, and French, and he was so attentive to original sources that one of his unfinished poems, on Athanasius's telepathic perception of Julian the Apostate's death, remained unfinished solely because he was unable to locate the precise source of the episode in the Greek *patrologia* of Migne. Cavafy engaged in a lively debate with Gibbon through marginal notes in his personal copy of the *Decline and Fall.* He diligently excerpted the *Cambridge Ancient History*, Bidez's great biography of Julian, and Paparrigopoulos's pioneering history of the Greeks. But even more remarkable than the poet's interest in history were the areas of history that excited his imagination.

As an Alexandrian Greek whose family came from Constantinople, Cavafy embodied the Hellenism of the Near Eastern diaspora. He was enthralled by the ancient history of the Greeks, but not by the Greeks of the Homeric epics, the Greeks of Periclean Athens, or Solon, Plato, and Demosthenes. It was the overseas Hellenism of the centuries after Alexander the Great that attracted Cavafy. He became the poet of the Hellenistic age, of the Roman Empire, and, most remarkably of all, of the Byzantine Empire all the way down to its end in the fifteenth century. For most Greeks of the mainland in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these were regrettable times when the Greeks were subjugated to alien imperialist powers, times in which the Greeks were no longer themselves imperialist. Their history in this later period was little appreciated and studied. The very word *Byzantine* had a negative ring to it.

There were, of course, exceptions, such as Gibbon's great history, John B. Bury's *History of the Later Roman Empire*, various edifying works on the rise of Christianity, and Paparrigopoulos's history of the later Greeks. These were the books, together with the sources upon which they drew, to which Cavafy turned for inspiration. His interests had been defined early. Already between 1888 and 1891 he had composed a whole cycle of eleven poems on Byzantine themes. The cycle was called *Byzantine Days*, and the poems appear from the titles to have been exercises in a Parnassian style that appealed to the young Cavafy. The first of his twelve poems on Julian, although published posthumously, was actually written in 1896.

These subjects became ever more important as the years went by, and once he had decided to write explicitly about homosexuality (from 1911 onwards) he acknowledged an erotic component in his

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

historical tastes. Seferis's famous observation that Cavafy changed in mid-career from a mediocre to a great poet has some basis in the published works, and the simple fact that the folders of unfinished poems show Cavafy at work on nothing drafted before 1918 would confirm that he himself was aware of this change. It was in 1911 with the poem known in English as "Dangerous Thoughts" (*Ta Epikindina*) that Cavafy publicly began the poetic exploration of his own sexuality. The poem is a brief monologue of an imagined Syrian student in the reigns of Constans and Constantius in the middle of the fourth century:

> Strengthened by meditation and study,
> I won't fear my passions like a coward:
> I'll give my body to sensual pleasure,
> to enjoyments I've dreamed of,
> to the most audacious erotic desires,
> to the lascivious impulses of my blood . . .

Let us turn now to the historical pieces among the unfinished poems. They can be divided, for the most part, into four major categories—Hellenistic history, Apollonius of Tyana, Julian, and later Byzantine history. All these are well represented in the works previously known. But these new poems take us further still into Cavafy's creative world. Each poem provides light on other poems, as a poem ought to do according to a famous methodological comment made by Cavafy in 1927: "light on one poem, partial light on another."

Consider, for example, one of the unfinished Hellenistic poems, entitled *Agelaos*. The notebooks contain Cavafy's own transcription of W. W. Tarn's narration in the *Cambridge Ancient History* on the conference of Naupactus in 217 B.C. The conference is notable, in Tarn's words, as "a last vain appeal made for Hellenic unity against the barbarian." Tarn goes on to observe, "Agelaus' famous speech is substantially genuine, otherwise Polybios would never have put it into the mouth of one of the hated Aetolians." Agelaos had warned the Greeks in vain to join together against a cloud rising in the West. Whether Rome or Carthage emerged victorious in the Punic Wars, that dark cloud was destined to overspread Greece. It is clear from the draft of his poem that Cavafy characteristically took the trouble to go back to the source for the episode, Polybius's *History*. He fashioned lines that speak to his own absorption in the unity of Hellenic culture:

> At the congress of Naupactus Agelaos
> said what had to be said. "Do not fight anymore—

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Greeks against Greeks. The struggle threatening us
is at hand. Either Carthage or Rome
will win, and then the winner will turn upon us.
Philip, O king, you must regard all Greeks
as your own. . . . be a savior to Greece."
Clever words, but they didn't do any good.
In the terrible, accursed days
Of Cynoscephalae, Magnesia, and Pydna
many of the Greeks would remember
the clever words, which didn't do any good.

This poem provides at last a definitive interpretation of a much-discussed poem that Cavafy published in 1931 (although it was probably first drafted in 1916). It is entitled *In the Year 200 B.C.* and begins with a line taken from Alexander the Great's proud message accompanying spoils sent to Athens from his Persian campaign: "Alexander, son of Philip, and the Greeks except the Lacedaimonians. . . ." The Lacedaimonians (Spartans) had not gone with Alexander to serve under a non-Spartan general. The speaker in this poem mocks the independence and isolationism of the Spartans and exults in the great new Hellenic world forged abroad by Alexander, a world in which Greek was heard as far away as India. Superficially this poem seemed to reflect Cavafy's own enthusiasm for the Hellenism of the diaspora, but Edmund Keeley, emphasizing the title's reference to the year 200, had rightly detected a more pessimistic tone in this poem. As he wrote in his book *Cavafy's Alexandria*, "The speaker is delivering his eulogy to the new Hellenism just three years before the last of the Macedonian Philips was thoroughly routed by the Romans at Cynoscephalae, and only ten years before the defeat of Antiochus III the Great at Magnesia, a defeat that established Roman supremacy over the great new world." Keeley's argument for irony and tragedy is magnificently confirmed by the unfinished Agelaos poem. The text by Tarn that had inspired Cavafy was first published in 1930, the year before Cavafy decided to go ahead with making *In the Year 200* public.

Yet another of the new poems is also pertinent to *In the Year 200.* It bears the title *Nothing about the Lacedaimonians*, and it is dated precisely to July of 1930. It is chiefly concerned with the limits of high principle:

By all means cultivate integrity
and practice it,
but in moderation, recognizing that very probably
you will reach a point at which integrity is unsuitable.
It's nice and it feels marvelous.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It's honorable. You'll be a model of integrity
in many matters and be helpful.
You'll be deservedly praised: what integrity he has!
But you should put water in your wine. Don't overdo it,
because (as you know) "Nothing about the Lacedaimonians."

This speaker manifestly recalls the one in *In the Year 200,* who concludes by asking smugly—"Why should we talk about the Spartans now?" Keeley's already strong argument for understanding this line as ironic applies equally to this new poem. Its title is meant to be a direct allusion to the quotation that begins the other poem: in fact, an earlier draft of the title was precisely *Except the Lacedaimonians,* citing again the actual words of Alexander's boastful message sent on behalf of his army. Lavagnini thought that the final title, *Nothing about the Lacedaimonians,* was some kind of ancient proverbial expression, which she was unable to locate. But it is not. It is simply Cavafy's own reworking of the text of Alexander to fit into the monologue of the speaker in the poem. Like the speaker evoked in 200 B.C., the new speaker finds that the Spartans' principles only served to cut them out of the action. But he was himself blind to the coming subjugation of the Hellenes to an alien power. The new poem reflects a vision of Sparta that is already clear in a famous poem published in 1928, *In Sparta,* where the mother of King Cleomenes III of Sparta agrees magnanimously to go to Egypt as a hostage of the Ptolemies. In the next year, 1929, Cavafy published a second poem on this same subject, *Come, O King of the Lacedaimonians,* celebrating the queen's noble suppression of her personal grief. It is hardly surprising, therefore, to find Cavafy turning yet again to Sparta in his unfinished text of 1930.

The new Julian poems naturally complement the seven that have been known for decades. But they bring forward the tension between the poet's now overt espousal of homosexuality and his equally overt espousal of Christianity. Furthermore, paganism undoubtedly suggested sensuality to Cavafy, and that was why he denounced (as Gibbon had done) Julian's turning the cult of the gods into a dessicated asceticism. Cavafy was well aware of the emperor's Christian childhood. The implications of this emerge dramatically from an unfinished poem, based directly upon a surviving letter of Julian himself, describing a visit he made as a young man to the remains of Troy in the company of a bishop named Pegasius. Both were Christians at the time. When Julian turned later to polytheism, Pegasius too cast off his faith and worshiped the gods. What were the two thinking when they went about the circuit of Troy together, concealing their inmost pre-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dilections? I have written earlier about "a palpable atmosphere of paedophilia" in this poem, and Renata Lavagnini has accepted the point:

> They came to the magnificent temple of Athena
> The Christian bishop Pegasius
> And the Christian prince Julian.
> They eyed the statues with longing and emotion,
> But they addressed each other hesitantly
> With allusions, with ambivalent words
> With phrases full of caution
> Because they weren't sure of each other.
> They were constantly afraid of giving something away,
> The false Christian bishop Pegasius
> The false Christian prince Julian.

The unspoken secret that the older man and the adolescent boy shared with each other finds a good parallel, as Lavagnini noticed, in the published poem of 1930 *He asked about the quality.* Here the speaker in the poem stops at a shop to make conversation with a handsome attendant:

> He asked about the quality of the handkerchiefs
> and how much they cost, his voice choking
> almost silenced by desire.
> And the answers came back in the same mood,
> distracted, the voice hushed,
> offering hidden consent.

The new Julian poems also include a piece, mentioned earlier, on the telepathy of Athanasius. Remote sensing of this kind is, as we have just seen at Troy and over the handkerchiefs, of the utmost significance for Cavafy. Another of the unfinished poems takes up a similar episode of telepathy at the time of the death of Domitian. In this case the poet returns to the life of the legendary sage Apollonius of Tyana, on whom he had published several pieces in the 1920s. The new work dates from the same period and describes an ecstatic perception of the murder of Domitian in Rome on the part of Apollonius in Ephesus in Asia Minor. The title of the poem is in classical Greek, *Peri ta tôn xustôn alsê,* words taken directly from Philostratus's *Life of Apollonius,* on which Cavafy depended as a source. The poem itself incorporates more of Philostratus's text as the sage cries out in his vision, "strike the tyrant" (*paie ton turannon*). Apollonius, like Julian, was important for Cavafy in his exploration of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a polytheism he could admire without compromising his taste for the Church.

The corpus of unfinished poems includes still another piece on supernatural perception among its four treatments of Julian. A blind old lady at Vienne, south of Lyon in France, tells the future emperor about his forthcoming elevation to the throne. The story had been reported by Ammianus Marcellinus, from whom Cavafy drew a Latin title for his poem (*Hunc deorum templis*). This is the only Latin title in all his poetic oeuvre and must be considered, like the titles in classical Greek from Athenaeus, Philostratus, Plato, Plutarch, and Julian, as an expression of the importance he attached to a historical source. Only one other title in Cavafy is in the Roman alphabet, and that is a citation of Dante attached to an early poem of 1901.

The competing claims of paganism and Christianity dominate many of the published, unpublished, and unfinished poems on Byzantium. The new texts now furnish a commentary on the familiar ones. Attentive readers of Cavafy will remember his extraordinary poem of 1912 entitled "In Church," appearing in the next year after "Dangerous Thoughts":

> I love the church: its labara,
> its silver vessels and candleholders,
> the lights, the ikons, the pulpit.
>
> When I go there, into a church of the Greeks,
> with its aroma of incense,
> its liturgical chanting and harmony,
> the majestic presence of the priests,
> dazzling in their ornate vestments,
> the solemn rhythm of their gestures—
> my thoughts turn to the great glories of our race
> to our glorious Byzantinism (*ston endoxo mas Vizantinismo*).

"Our Byzantinism" was a startling thing to say in 1912 and would have been almost anytime until relatively recently. Yet Cavafy saw the Hellenism of the Byzantine Empire not as a corruption of the Greek polytheist past but as an affirmation of it, to which he willingly linked himself. In one of the so-called unpublished poems, a work of 1914, Cavafy had written about the very last year of the Byzantine Empire, when Theophilos Palaiologos groaned in despair, "I would rather die than live." Cavafy invested this distant and pathetic figure with a new significance for the Greeks:

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ah, Kyr Theophilos Palaiologos,
how much of the pathos, the yearning of our race,
how much weariness—
such exhaustion from injustice and persecution—
your six tragic words contained.

"The yearning of our race" and "our Byzantinism" now find their echo in the unfinished poems on Byzantine themes. Perhaps the most resonant of these is another piece with a dramatic date at the very end of the Byzantine Empire. It resumes the lament of the poem on Theophilos Palaiologos but unites with it Cavafy's sexual interests and their complex relation to paganism in a Christian world. The poem, called *After swimming*, begins with two young men stepping naked from the sea onto the beach. The day is hot, and they are reluctant to put their clothes back on. The various lines drafted by Cavafy show him striving to praise the beauty of their nakedness, their faces, and even their private parts. These lines call to mind a poem entitled *Days of 1908*, published by Cavafy just five months before his death. Here a twenty-five-year-old who lives off card games and borrowed money and who wears foul and tattered clothes is said to cool himself at the baths with a morning swim. The speaker remembers him in 1908 as "stark naked, impeccably handsome, a miracle." In the new poem the poet observes that the old Greeks appreciated the loveliness of youth, and up to this point the reader would hardly be aware that *After swimming* is a historical poem rather than a straightforwardly sensual one.

But suddenly we are told that the boys' teacher was none other than Gemistos Plethon. With this revelation we know that we are in the middle of the fifteenth century. Gemistos was a renowned neo-Platonic philosopher of the period, whose sympathy for paganism aroused the suspicion of the Christian establishment and led ultimately to his exile in Mistra. Gemistos was, of course, himself a Christian, and accordingly his problems meant something to Cavafy. Once Gemistos is introduced into the poem, the charges of paganism from the emperor and the patriarch are mentioned. The poem then concludes with a resounding conjunction of Hellenism and the sensuous young men with which it began:

On the youth of that time Georgios Gemistos
had a great influence through his teaching.
He was very wise and exceedingly eloquent,
and a spokesman for Hellenic culture.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This is a translation of the poem as reconstructed by Lavagnini. But the drafts show a stunning variant. One version of the final line describes Gemistos as a great lover (*erastis*) of Hellenic culture. In many ways this is a more satisfying text, combining the eroticism with which the poem begins with the Christian master of Greek paganism with which it ends.

The other Byzantine poems also concentrate on the late age of the empire. Although with less overt eroticism, they reflect Cavafy's pride in "our Byzantinism" together with his historical awareness of the forces that worked against what he admired. The two poems concerned with John Cantacuzenus reopen a vein of creativity already known from previously published work and allow Lavagnini now to identify, with good reason, a cycle of Cantacuzenus poems.

In 1341, when the Emperor Andronicus III died, John Cantauzenus failed to secure the regency for Andronicus's nine-year-old son. For six years there was a struggle for power between Andronicus's widow, Anna of Savoy, who was supported by the Constantinopolitan patriarch, and Cantacuzenus. In two splendid poems already known from Cavafy's published oeuvre, one from 1924 and the other from 1925, the success of Cantacuzenus at the end of the civil war in 1347 is commemorated. The first is a monologue set in that year and delivered by a regretful adherent of Anna's party, who blames his choosing the wrong side on bad advice from the patriarch

> with his imposing hieratic presence,
> his completely bogus information,
> his promises and all his drivel.

The second is an elegiac speech on the occasion of John Cantacuzenus's coronation in the same year, when colored glass was used in place of precious stones. The speaker remarks, "Our afflicted empire was extremely poor," but he finds nothing humiliating or undignified in those little pieces of glass. They seem to him a sad protest against an unjust fate in the collapsing world of Byzantium. Gibbon's words must certainly have inspired the poet here: "Such was the proud poverty of the times, that the absence of gold and jewels was supplied by the paltry artifices of glass and gilt leather." (DF 63).

The two new poems are both dated to 1925 and are therefore of virtually the same date as the two already known. Another important source of Cavafy's interest in Cantacuzenus at that time emerges from the language of the first of these, entitled "The Patriarch," which borrows admiring epithets for the emperor directly from the narrative of Paparrigopoulos. The struggle with the patriarch is sharply delin-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

eated, by contrasting the characters of the two men, both named John—the "reckless and graceless" John and the "wise, gentle, patriotic, courageous, able" John. Once again we hear the adjective "our" that seems to haunt Cavafy's accounts of Byzantium, as Diana Haas has often observed: "our Byzantinism," "the yearning of our race," "our afflicted empire," and now, of Cantacuzenus, the great man "who ruled our people then."

The second of the new Cantacuzenus poems, entitled "On Epiphany," is remarkable for its highly Cavafian evocation of the original historical sources for the period. The histories of Nicephorus Gregoras and John Cantacuzenus himself are cited explicitly. The emperor wrote a partisan but well-documented history of his own time, which was complemented by that of Gregoras. Both writers described the death of the emperor's mother, Theodora Cantacuzene, on Epiphany in 1342 during the civil war. Cavafy's poem ends with these sad and scholarly lines in the first person:

> The death of Cantacuzene, pitiable as it was,
> I have drawn from the History of Nicephorus Gregoras.
> In the historical work of the emperor
> John Cantacuzenus the story is
> somewhat different, but no less sad.

With four poems devoted to John Cantacuzenus in 1924 and 1925, we have to ask what attracted Cavafy so strongly to this rather pathetic figure of late Byzantine history. Something in his reading of Gibbon, Paparrigopoulos, Gregoras, and John had clearly found an echo in himself. I suspect it was the courage of John in successfully resisting the authority of the established patriarchate without sacrificing his faith. After his abdication John went on to become a monk and a historian. He was a man of integrity who held steadfastly to his principles, whose glass ornaments proved him indifferent to ostentation and wealth. He knew that he was part of a decadent and impoverished world, but he maintained the Byzantinism of Cavafy's people, "our people." He was as beautiful in his spiritual nakedness as the two disciples of Gemistos were in their physical nakedness. He had the dignity of the Spartans in the face of adversity. His splendor could never die any more than that remembered image of a vagabond youth at the baths in 1908.

Cavafy's poems, particularly the personal ones, have often seemed like snapshots of the past, snapshots in which souls and bodies that have long since deteriorated or turned to dust remain still unspoiled. The photographic parallel had occurred to the poet himself, whose

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

poem of 1913 *Etsi (Thus)*, known in English as *The Photograph*, movingly evokes a lost past that, thanks to the camera, is somehow not altogether lost and preserves a beauty that triumphs over a life of degradation:

> Who knows what a degrading, vulgar life you lead;
> how horrible the surroundings must have been
> when you posed to have this picture taken;
> what a cheap soul you must have.
> But in spite of all this, and even more, you remain for me
> the dream-like face, the figure
> shaped for and dedicated to the Hellenic kind of pleasure—
> that's how you remain for me
> and how my poetry speaks about you.

The unfinished drafts now published give us a new poem actually entitled in Greek *The Photograph (I Photographia)*. It is dated 1924 and harks back to the earlier poem of 1913. An unnamed man is looking at the image of a handsome youth on a photograph made in the year 1892. He feels melancholy, but then he is comforted by the fact that there is not the slightest trace of shame *(ntropê)* in the picture:

> Only fools use words like "depraved" and "obscene."

Lavagnini has noticed that in the chronological list of poems that Cavafy left for the years 1891–1925 he recorded a poem, now lost, from January 1904 with the title *The Photograph*. The date of that poem could easily accommodate the setting of the poem we have now retrieved with the same title. What the relation may have been between the two works we can probably never say, but some relation there must have been. The impact of the camera on Cavafy's creative imagination can thus be taken back to a relatively early phase of his career.

The camera of the mind was no less important, as we have seen in the poem *Days of 1908*. Its images were, like photographic ones, reminders of a profligate's freedom from shame. These reminders helped to make him a poet, as he had proclaimed in a poem of 1915: if he had felt shame, he asked, "What kind of a poet, what kind of artist would I be?" We knew already that Cavafy used alcohol to relieve his inhibitions. In *Half an Hour*, a work of 1917, he called it magic. The drafts of the unfinished poems bring us back to this theme in a poem of 1919. Alcohol unlocks an erotic image from the distant past, and the aging poet returns to his preoccupation with shame. Unfor-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tunately, the variant lines make it exceptionally difficult to establish a definitive text, but it is easy to see what Cavafy was after here. He is in a closed house at night. He drinks until his surroundings disappear and he finds himself once again in a street in Marseilles looking at a beautiful ephebe.

> It must have been the alcohol I drank last night,
> It must have been the sleeplessness: I've been tired all day.
> In front of me the dark wooden stand with the archaic head
> vanished, and the door to the dining-room,
> and the red armchair, and the little sofa.
> In their place came a street in Marseilles.
> And my soul, liberated, unconstrained
> was there again and moved about,
> with the image of a sensitive and sensual young man—
> corrupt young man, I must admit.
>
> My soul felt lighter. It, poor thing,
> is completely burdened by the weight of age.
>
> My soul felt lighter and I saw
> a congenial street in Marseilles,
> with the image of the happy, corrupt youth:
> *he* never felt shame, he really didn't.

It was in 1897, twenty-two years before, that Cavafy had visited Marseilles with his brother John on the way to England, but the memory of that youth had never left the recesses of his imagination. What Cavafy had once called "the magic alcohol" brought it back. The boy had felt no shame. Early drafts of this poem show Cavafy commanding himself to feel none too.

The city of Alexandria, in which Cavafy spent the better part of his life and where so many of his memories were formed, was the subject of Keeley's illuminating monograph. Among the new texts there is one that speaks directly of the city, and with this it will be appropriate to conclude. The poem is dated to December of 1927. It proudly proclaims the poet's commitment to the later ages of Hellenism:

> My imagination goes now
> not to Alexandria of the Ptolemies,
> but of the fifth and sixth centuries.
> Alexandria is a very important and vivacious place

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in the sixth century and the start of the seventh,
until the arrival of the Arab power (*o krataios Aravismos*).
They still speak Greek well . . .

It would not be unnatural for us
to look at that age with such feeling:
we have now brought back
Greek speech to its own soil.

In a variant drafted for the final lines, Cavafy had expressed himself even more directly:

I am a Greek poet, and a Greek of the city
who did my Hellenic work on its soil.

Cavafy saw himself as the heir of a great tradition. Aristomenes, a prince from western Libya, was the imaginary subject of a poem written less than a year after these lines. The man was a pretentious poseur who fancied Greek dress, culture, and language, but he lived in constant terror of making solecisms in Greek. When he did, as Cavafy puts it,

the Alexandrians, in their usual way,
would start to make fun of him . . .

So the poor man went about constipated from unspoken talk. Aristomenes was an outsider whose embarrassment was a tribute to the enviable culture of the Alexandrians. The arrival of Islam made a difference, as this newly revealed poem makes clear in its explicit reference to Arab power. Even so, Cavafy's poem *Exiles,* from 1914, shows him reflecting on the survival of Greek among the Hellenic few as late as the ninth century. The city was not what it had been, but nonetheless

In the evenings we meet on the sea front,
the five of us (all, naturally, under fictitious names)
and some of the few other Greeks
still left in the city.
Sometimes we discuss church affairs
(the people here seem to lean toward Rome)
and sometime literature.
The other day we read some lines by Nonnos:
what imagery, what rhythm, what diction and harmony!

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Nonnos, that great epic poet of Dionysiac mythology in Christian Egypt of the fifth century, appears here as the writer to whom a handful of Alexandrian Greeks turn in the ninth century for inspiration. It was similarly to the Hellenic world that flourished in Nonnos's day and that continued to flourish all over the Byzantine Empire in the days of the caliphs that Cavafy turned for his inspiration as he sat in twentieth-century Alexandria. Through Cavafy the city would recapture the ancient glory of the Hellenes.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Instructions for Composing a Haiku

DAVID STARKEY

Make it exact: the ribs should show,
firm hoops beneath a thin shield of flesh.
It should sparkle like the skill
of a fastidious artist, precise
as a gnat. It should be a vessel
that requires nothing more than itself
to be full. A footstool. Quick.
A dagger. Microscopic.

Yet make it subdued, as the beginning or conclusion
of a rash. Let it melt
into shade, let it glide *towards* becoming
the way tides suggest something
about the shoreline that would otherwise
go unrecognized.

Granted, brevity and novelty
are its chief merits.
So above all it should shock
like the backward roll of thunder
in an unexpected gale.
                Worried
they'll see through it, the knaves
and hags? Worried they'll toss it
like dry straw onto a trash fire?
Don't worry: call it a frigate and name it
after a state. Conviction propels.
If they think it's seaworthy,
it'll float,
        goddamnit,
                it will float.

✪ DAVID STARKEY teaches creative writing at North Central College, Naperville, Illinois. His latest collection of poems is *Open Mike Night at the Cabaret Voltaire.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MEMOIR

Album of Bullet Holes

STANLEY KAUFFMANN

I

I saw my first bullet holes in London in 1951. They were rare in London because no fighting had taken place on the ground, but one day during the war German planes had skimmed low and pocked some buildings. Bomb sites were common, still common, brutal wounds in the city.

In Paris that year bomb sites were rare, but many buildings had bullet holes. Mostly they were from German raids and executions. Small memorial plaques were beginning to appear on walls where Resistance fighters had been shot during the Occupation. There were other bullet holes made by the Resistance.

I had not been in the war. I had been deferred twice in the draft because of a serious operation I had undergone in 1939. I had married in 1943 and, before and after, had done some volunteer work, as Laura had done. But, to us, the war had been newspapers and newsreels and radio, together with visits from friends in uniform on leave.

All through the war years, out of uniform, tensed by what I had read about the taunting of civilians during World War I, I expected jeers and possibly worse in the New York streets. Nothing. I passed thousands of uniformed men and women in those years, spoke with many, but only once was I jeered at. It was on Eighth Street in Greenwich Village. Two young men in uniform hooted at me as they walked by. They were not fighter pilots or submarine crewmen. I could tell from their insignia that they were language students in a special army program at a university nearby.

In 1951, on our first European visit, driving around Britain for a couple of weeks, Laura and I saw great damage still unrepaired. One of the least serious matters stands out in memory. In Manchester we stayed overnight in the city's grandest hotel. It still had a faint air of luxe about it, more touching than awesome. But in our room, around the light switches, around the doorknobs, the walls were black with smudges from people's hands. The grand hotel hadn't yet been able to repaint.

II

That tiny sting on Eighth Street lingered, and grew. I wasn't aware of the change at once, but it altered my view of what had happened in the world, of what lay ahead, of myself in relation to this century.

As time churned along after the war, the past began to look different. The refugees, for instance. From the early 1930s, New York had seen numbers of refugees, mostly German and Austrian, mostly Jewish. I had met many, particularly those who had been in the theater abroad; I had even worked with a few. At first, meeting them had been, in a way, shocking. They were proofs, actual proofs. Cruelties, distant from our experience, really were savaging Europe. Here were people, people I could touch and talk to, who had seen these things.

My father had a first cousin, Siegmund, born in Stuttgart, who had earned a German doctorate in international law in 1932 and had been slated for a career in the foreign ministry there. With Hitler, that career evaporated. In the mid-1930s a private agency began a program to bring over promising young German Jews, and Siegmund was among them. He had himself suffered little, he told

---

✪ STANLEY KAUFFMANN, film critic for the *New Republic*, has contributed ten previous Albums to THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, three of which are included in *Albums of Early Life*.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

me, but he had seen a great deal. Luckily, in his high school years he had taken a course in accounting, so this embryo diplomat now found work as a bookkeeper in New York. When I commiserated, he brushed my sympathy aside. "I owe Hitler a debt," he said. "Not so long years ago I was clicking my heels, bowing, I thought maybe to buy a monocle. Now I send out for tuna on toast, chocolate malt. A lot better."

Siegmund sought out American agencies, and in a year or so he was able to bring his parents over from Germany. I went to see them at a rest home in upper Manhattan. His father, who had been in the textile business, was a nondescript man whom I can hardly remember. His mother was a dark-eyed, gracious woman who had no voice. What they had been through, not in the camps, just the harassment in daily life in Stuttgart, the indignities in getting the papers to leave and in leaving, had left her mute. It was six months before she could utter a sound.

Still, refugees had been having a contrary effect on me and my friends. Siegmund and his parents were natural exceptions, but in general I shared the feelings of my friends. What had sent the refugees here was terrible, we knew. But the truth, and we were eager to be candid with one another about it, was that it got to be tedious, this constant meeting with refugees. After two, three, five years, shock turned into a species of toleration. We avoided meeting them if we could. Jokes, the sure sign of accommodation, sprouted among us. A surprising number of the refugees we met were composers of light music, each of whom said he had been exceptionally successful at home. Our joke about them was that we would beat the next such person to the punch. When introduced, we would say, though we never did, "How do you do And how many months did *your* operetta run in Vienna?"

In later days this tedium of ours was discomfiting to recall, but it lasted through the war. In 1944 or so a German theater director, now established in New York, invited me to have coffee with a friend of his, a playwright and poet he had known in Germany who now lived in California and was coming east for a visit. The friend's name was Brecht. I had never heard of him. I didn't really need to meet still another refugee playwright, I thought, so I found an excuse not to go.

Much like this had happened, much that, though it made the war real, kept it apart from me. It was the Eighth Street sting that began slowly to move matters into focus. In time I saw that it was not a question of knowing what had happened but of where I stood.

III

Increasingly, as the century continued to pour out horrors even after the war, I felt like an idiot wandering through a minefield who, thus far anyway, was coming out safely on the other side. So much that had happened in this century had left me, in any direct way, unmarked.

I didn't need to travel to Europe for this sense to become vivid. The war had blasted two of my close friends. They had been members of a repertory theater to which I belonged for ten years, and they were both richly talented. One of them was killed in the Battle of the Bulge. The other, who was the best Hamlet I have ever seen, was disordered by his time in the army. Remarque, in *All Quiet on the Western Front*, speaks of men who "even though they may have escaped its shells, were destroyed by the war." He meant the First War. It was true of this Hamlet in the Second.

Still, it was Europe, in different places and different years, that scored deeply in me this view of myself as visitor, observer, escapee.

Along one side of the main square in Bologna is a wall covered with snapshots, framed under glass, of Italian Resistance fighters who were killed. I first saw the wall in 1956, saw it again recently. At some of the faces, most of them young, I looked hard, searching somehow for their recognition of me, for brotherhood, possible forgiveness.

In Venice, at the film festival in 1964, I encountered some Poles in the film world whom I had met in Warsaw a few weeks before. There, in that struggling city, I had learned that almost all of them had been in the camps. Now, on the Lido, they played beach ball in swim suits, laughing and taunting and crowing, with their camp numbers tattooed on their arms. Could this really be possible? I wondered. Then I saw that it would seem impossible only to someone like me.

In Budapest the previous month, Laura and I had arrived at the railroad station at six in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the morning to catch the through train to Belgrade. It would stop for only two minutes. I asked a guard which platform we should wait on. He told me, and we waited there. When the train arrived, exactly on time, it was on a track at the far side of the station. Laden with bags, we rushed around there as fast as we could, in time to see the train disappear.

We went to the station office to complain. The official replied coldly that the train always stopped on the same track, that we had misunderstood the guard, which I knew was not true. He told us that a local to Belgrade would be along at 12:30. It was now 6:30. We went to the waiting room, furnished with plain benches and tables, and, though fuming, sat, leaned on a table, tried to sleep on folded arms. When it came time to stir ourselves, we saw that there were pamphlets stuck in boxes on the walls of the room. In Hungarian, of course, and all bearing the hammer and sickle or the red star.

Our local arrived. We boarded and rattled to the Yugoslavian border. There we had to change to an even dinkier Yugoslav train, which rattled us on into Belgrade. The trip took about three times as long as the through train. But the jouncing cleared something in my head. In the Budapest station no one had spoken English or Italian, which I spoke a bit. I had asked my questions in crude German. Hungary, Germany's wartime ally, was now an ally of the Soviets. That guard early this morning had thought we were German and had deliberately given us the wrong track.

As the lights of Belgrade came into view, my irritation dimmed, and, with crazy pleasure, I felt a small vicarious thrill slip in. That guard had assumed that I was part of what had happened in the world and, as he could, was punishing me for it.

I had already seen a quite different version of revenge, neat but satisfying. In 1960 Laura and I were in Vienna, and, as arranged by a friend in New York, we met some Viennese actors. They took us to a *Heurige*, a spring wine festival in the woods above the city. There we all sat at a picnic table, ate superb delicatessen that we had brought with us, and drank the new wine.

One of the group was a comedian, a Jew, who had spent the war years in Palestine. He had barely escaped with his life from Austria, and now he was back on the stage here. I asked him how he could perform for these people who had wanted to gas and incinerate him. He smiled, as if he had often been asked the question and was delighted to answer it again. "Now," he said, "when I make so with my hand, when I make so with my face, I make them laugh. Now," he said, *"I* control *them."*

In 1967 I was one of a dozen American writers who were given a two-week tour of German cities by an American and a German foundation, to meet German writers of various kinds and German political figures. In Hamburg a large luncheon was arranged for us, each of us flanked with worthies of the city.

The man on my right was one of the most impressive people I have met in my life. Carl-Friedrich von Weizsäcker had been a professor of physics before the war, an eminent researcher in nuclear physics. I had heard that, during the war, he had been one of the people working on the atomic bomb for Hitler. After the war he had quit science and, qualified also in this quite different field, had become a professor of philosophy.

For some reason he took to me at once. I don't know why this happens, any more than I know the reverse, when someone takes an instant dislike to me before I have said or done anything. Weizsäcker liked me immediately. And there I sat, conversing amiably with this white-haired, reticent but warm man who had done his best to give Hitler the means of global victory. I felt myself trembling, with fear of my congenial response yet also with excitement, to be sitting there eating veal cutlets with a man who had been on the inside of the other side.

Above all I sensed that he was a man who had been purged, who had been harrowed, sickened, transformed. He had once been celebrated in science. He had given up that work, that eminence, surely in penance.

I asked him whether any of his writing had been published in English. He said that a few years earlier he had given a series of lectures in Edinburgh in English and that they had been published in book form. When I got back to New York, I ordered the book, called *The Relevance of Science.* In it he wrote:

I lived under a dictatorship for twelve years. I did not behave like a hero, but I studied the functioning of the system. Perhaps the main weakness of that particular dictatorship was that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

it did not believe in science; still it knew how to apply the means provided by science.

His book explained why a true belief in science was incompatible with what Hitler did.

Later on, the more I thought about our conversation, the more peculiarly frightened I felt. It was incomprehensible, I wanted it to remain incomprehensible, that I should have an almost venerating view of a man who had been laboring to kill me.

When we parted after lunch, he asked me where our group was headed. I said Frankfurt, Düsseldorf, Munich, Berlin. In two of those cities, friends of his called me at my hotel, said that they had heard from him about me, and came around for coffee. Why, I wondered, had I so impressed this man? It wasn't any kind of modesty that made me wonder. Possibly it was because, after liking me, after conversing with me so easily, he realized that I was one of the people he had been trying to obliterate.

In Bonn our group was invited to a meeting with the chancellor, Kurt Kiesinger, in the official residence. We all sat around a long oval green-covered table, our number again interweaved with Germans, this time members of the government. Kiesinger, who looked like Emil Jannings with a more shapely nose, spoke English fairly well. Several in our group were teachers, and Kiesinger wanted to know about the student troubles then flaring in America. I was one of those who answered and was flattered by the way he listened.

Toward the end of the meeting he asked where we were traveling after Bonn. We told him, and he regretted that we were not going to visit Stuttgart, the chief city of his native state. I said that my grandfather had come from Stuttgart. He began to say something to me, then stopped. I'm sure, I'm completely sure, that he had been going to ask me why I didn't visit some of my relatives there. Then he remembered that any relatives of mine would no longer be there.

Again I had that strange, almost rueful feeling of being only distantly connected to the core of my century.

IV

It wasn't that the bullet holes were a reproof. It wasn't any measure of guilt or of frustrated hunger for suffering. I was glad to have escaped the suffering and glad, too, to have escaped the bitterness of some of my friends who were in the war and were disgusted by much that happened afterward. Still, I felt as if I were traveling in a bathysphere through the century.

Other wars came, Korea, Vietnam, which I could not have been in, which I did not escape in the way I had escaped the Second War, and even with Vietnam veterans, against whose war I had marched in protest, I felt a sort of envy. They had been there. I understand that my envy is a luxury that they have earned for me. But the understanding doesn't free me from it.

When Laura and I were in Warsaw in 1964, we were invited to the home of a Polish film critic. He and his wife showed us a book of Warsaw's history during the Second War. I came to some photographs of the destroyed ghetto. Our host said that this very apartment house in which we were sitting had been built on the site of the ghetto. I was sitting on a sofa in that house, looking at a beautifully produced book of pictures of the destroyed ghetto. Safe, privileged with rue, I felt that I had been looking at books like this all through the century.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Jane Eyre

The Tale of the Governess

MILLICENT BELL

Although *Jane Eyre* is a love story that ends in marriage, everything Jane says about herself is calculated to show that she is *not* the romantic heroine for whom the marriage ending is a foregone conclusion. To begin with, she is plain; her lack of the requisite beauty of such a heroine is stressed continually. She is puny, her features irregular—and her unpromising physical attributes never fail to be remarked upon by everyone she encounters, and by herself. Even as a child, her appearance contrasts, like that of George Eliot's Maggie Tulliver, with a cousin's "pink cheeks and golden curls [which] seemed to give delight to all who looked at her, and to purchase indemnity for every fault." But she is also different from the romantic heroine in her rejection of the defect—seen as a grace—of female helplessness. She is threateningly intelligent, forthright to the point of bluntness, submitting herself mentally to no one, not even when she finally does improbably win a man's love. Her unsubmissiveness, her independence is her social fault.

With Rochester as with everyone an urge to independence of mind possesses her to a degree that would be a handicap to the conventional Victorian marriage. Such independence is a threat to the literary tradition of masculine heroism—and, indeed, it is not surprising that when she does marry him, he is literally a cripple, reduced in manly strength, maimed and blind, forced to lean on *her*, to accept *her* guiding hand. Brontë herself could not conceive of male heroism surviving in its full splendor at the side of such a mate. But the first meeting of this hero and heroine occurs when he falls from his horse and, limping, must lean on her shoulder to mount again. He collapses again upon her shoulder when he learns with dismay of the visit of his dangerous brother-in-law to Thornton Hall. It is she who rescues him when his bed has been set afire by the lunatic Bertha. Even in the time of their courtship when he is his full self, she makes it clear that though she calls him "master" (and she will always call him that) she will not be a helpless parasite. When she discovers his deception on the eve of a bigamous marriage, she rejects his assumption that she is helpless, a bird in the fowler's net. "I am no bird; and no net ensnares me; I am a free human being with an independent will; which I now exert to leave you," she says.

Yet dependence is the essence of her condition in the economic meaning of the word when, as a little girl, she is orphaned and sent to live with unsympathetic relatives. She suffers not only from the weakness of femalehood but from the further insecurity of the poor person always threatened with a pauper's helplessness. Her insecure position between middle-class status and that of those coerced and confined absolutely by poverty is already signified by the history of her father, "a poor clergyman," like the novelist's father, the Reverend Brontë. The Reverend Eyre already had represented that vulnerable gentility combined with poverty which is his daughter's portion. He and her mother have both died of the typhus he contracted while visiting among

✪ MILLICENT BELL, Professor Emerita of English at Boston University, is the editor of *New Essays on Hawthorne's Tales* and the author, most recently, of *Meaning in Henry James.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the poor in "a large manufacturing town"—in, that is, the nineteenth-century city, the major focus of the new capitalist society which was creating a proletariat underclass as the century got under way. He joins his impoverished parishioners in death, dying of the infection of poverty from which his negligible class advantage had not been able to protect him.

But Jane does not willingly give up the claims of the superior class to which she belongs by right of birth and upbringing. With the Reeds she suffers not only the dependency of childhood and of femalehood, but the excruciating humiliation of the poor relation, someone who has a claim upon those who shelter her but pays for that shelter in the coin of shame. She suffers precisely because she knows the value of caste; she may be poor, but she does not want to belong to the Poor. Little John Reed, finding her reading, says, "You have no business to take our books; you are a dependent, mamma says; you have no money; your father left you none; you ought to beg, and not to live here with gentlemen's children like us, and eat the same meals we do, and wear clothes at our mamma's expense."

The small boy is allowed to abuse her, and when she strikes back, she is reproved by the nurse, Bessie, for her "shocking conduct" in striking "a young gentleman, your benefactress's son. Your young master." "Master! How is he my master? Am I a servant?" cries Jane—clinging to her title of gentlewoman even at the age of eight—and is told: "No; you are less than a servant, for you do nothing for your keep." When asked if she would like to find some of her other relatives, she replies, having heard that they are poor: "I should not like to belong to poor people." She adds, "I could not see how poor people had the means of being kind; and then to learn to speak like them, to adopt their manners, to be uneducated, to grow up like one of the poor women I saw sometimes nursing their children or washing their clothes at the cottage doors of the village of Gateshead: no, I was not heroic enough to purchase liberty at the price of caste."

She does dare to imperil her relation with the Reeds, nonetheless: "I will never call you aunt again as long as I live," she declares to Mrs. Reed, and though the time will come, in the romantic turnabout of the plot, when she forgives her former oppressor and calls her "dear Aunt," her casting out into the snake pit of the Lowood Institution is an expectable immediate consequence. This school (like the real Cowan Bridge School for Clergymen's Daughters which Brontë attended) is an institution for orphaned and unprovided-for girls of "good" family, and the treatment of its inmates is punitive in large measure; they are punished for an economic "fall" which is as disgraceful as the Fallen Woman's surrender of moral status—and implies, indeed, that such ultimate disgrace may be in store for them.

But Lowood turns out to be not only a place of punishment for Jane. Such education as Lowood provides makes possible a way of independence through self-support. She finds at Lowood at least one admirable teacher as a model and begins her own career as a teacher. Teaching, of course, was one option for such a girl as it was for Charlotte Brontë and her sisters. It meant modest independence in the place of dependence on one's relatives or a marriage motivated by the need for support. At Miss Wooler's School at Roe Head where she had been a pupil, Charlotte, at nineteen, began teaching, a drudging, confining occupation which she hated but which gave her the idea that she and her sisters might themselves establish a school of their own. With this aim, Emily and Charlotte went to Brussels to train themselves in foreign languages at the *pensionnat* Héger, and Charlotte stayed on as a teacher.

How inadequate a fulfillment teaching might be for such women as the Brontë sisters is, of course, made obvious in the late chapters of *Jane Eyre*, when Jane accepts a post as a rural school mistress after her rescue by the Rivers family. And yet teaching was distinguishable from the only alternative mode of paying work available to them, which was governessing, by the greater independence and dignity it made possible. Jane observes of her position, "In truth it was humble—but then it was sheltered, and I wanted a safe asylum; it was plodding—but then, compared with that of a governess in a rich house, it was independent; and the fear of servitude with strangers entered my soul like iron; it was not ignoble—not unworthy—not mentally degrading."

In teaching the children of the humble farmers and workers of a country neighborhood, moreover, she heals, a little, her fearful shrinking from identification with the poor,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

which is the consequence, as has been seen, of her attachment to caste superiority. She feels a democratic kinship with the young minds ready to grow and develop and to challenge the presumptions of privileged refinement: "These coarsely-clad little peasants are of flesh and blood as good as the scions of gentlest genealogy . . . the germs of native excellence, refinement, intelligence, kind feeling, are as likely to exist in their hearts as in those of the best-born."

Although she finds some satisfactions in this meritorious occupation, her unique personal capacities are not called upon, as St. John Rivers observes. What he offers her instead is another form of the marriage-ending, an invitation to become a missionary wife in India. But Jane does not see such a discovery of vocation as necessarily connected with marriage. Missionary work attracts her; she is willing to go as his "sister," his fellow worker; but he is right to insist that this would not be socially acceptable. There were no single female missionaries. It was not even teaching, however, but governessing, to which she had unfavorably compared it, that eighteen-year-old Jane reaches for when she places her advertisement in a newspaper after eight years at Lowood: "A young lady accustomed to tuition is desirous of meeting with a situation in a private family where the children are under fourteen. She is qualified to teach the usual branches of a good English education, together with French, Drawing, and Music."

In going to Thornfield to care for Rochester's niece Adèle, Jane will try the only other approved occupation besides teaching for the unmarried poor gentlewoman. Despite the greater constriction and deprivation of the governess's life, it might seem to prove again what she had lost, the safe domestic enclosure of home and family. But even in the home of so good-natured an employer as Rochester, Jane's position as a governess illustrates the particularly poignant condition of the "gently bred" woman who, lacking or rejecting the refuge of marriage, is forced to work for her living. Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century and to a degree even in later decades, a governess was likely to be someone who suffered what modern sociologists call "status incongruity" in being neither a member of her employer's class nor exactly a servant. As a girl of slender means who is of neither the servant nor the master class, the governess was poised precariously on the divide between, nostalgic for the lost security of her own family and her original social position, in danger of collapsing into working-class slavery or even pauperism if she was, as was often the case, summarily dismissed by her employers. The governess was more in peril of such a fate than the household servant, who was traditionally supported in old age or infirmity by the family that employed her.

The plight of the unemployed governess poised in an acute form the problem of the "distressed gentlewomen" that aroused considerable discussion in the 1830s and 1840s, a period of worsening economic crisis and unemployment in England when gentlemen as well as others could suffer such loss of income as made it no longer possible for their adult unmarried daughters to depend on them. The unemployed governess became an embarrassment to the members of her class—as the distress of unemployed workers' daughters might not. It was a situation that led not only to the formation of a Governesses' Mutual Assurance society in 1829 but a Governesses' Benevolent Institution in 1841 that aimed to come to the aid of such unfortunate women. It led, also, to the beginning of higher education for them—the beginnings, really, of higher education for women—which might strengthen their professional qualification.

The possibility of pauperism raised an even more alarming spectre in the mind of the comfortable class: pauperism might lead literally to the ultimate in female degradation, prostitution, to which the unemployed woman, once a Lady, might be driven. This employment of her feminine attributes was an ultimate condition already dangerously intimated in her descent into the ranks of teachers and, even more, of governesses. More comprehensively than the teacher who teaches outside the home, the governess is paid to perform the motherly functions of protecting and caring for children and teaching them in their own homes, as the prostitute offers wifely sexual service for payment. In *Jane Eyre* the governess is the maternal surrogate for an orphan, yet governesses may be said to assume these roles even where the middle-class mother is present but has surrendered them.

The crucial issue was payment—the gentleman's wife was the proof of his affluence by

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

never being involved in paying work, however diligently she might work in the home, as well as outside it in volunteer social service or religious organizations. The very definition of Victorian ladyhood included her completest abstention from the exchange of labor for pay. With the growth of a servant class and the prestige of visible idleness, female weakness and practical incapacity were the very signs of leisure-class femininity.

It was certainly paradoxical, just the same, that, though her status as a paid person degraded her, the governess was entrusted with the tenderest maternal function as inculcator of morality—which was why, of course, she *had* to be a Lady herself, so that the values of class would have been inbred in her. In her own childhood, when her own family had been more prosperous, she had herself had a governess. But the essential of femininity, the sexual, was denied her since she had the task of conveying to the middle- or upper-class child a behavioral code purged of sexual knowledge. For this reason she was, in a contemporary phrase, a "tabooed woman" for the gentlemen she came into contact with in the household in which she was employed, and also tabooed among those employed alongside of them in the same households. Nothing was more revolting than a fallen governess. There was literally nothing left for her, after her fall, than "the streets."

Rochester's upper-class guests discuss governesses they have known, "half of them detestable and the rest ridiculous," says Blanche Ingram, who, with her brother, recalls the nasty tricks they used to play on their own governesses, especially one who had fallen in love with the tutor. A governess's liaisons even with a person of low class were held to present a "bad example to the innocence of childhood." Perhaps in part because she herself is not definable simply as a working-class person, though she works, she "lowers herself" dangerously by violating the prohibitions against such class merger. And such social mobility suggests an even more dangerous possibility, her re-entry into her own class by an upward rather than a downward movement, by marriage to a man of the employer class. In Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw*, which is haunted by Brontë's novel, the undenotable evil of his governess's predecessor may be only that she has had a love affair with a servant, the valet Quint. But it may also be that she has been, like James's narrator herself, even more transgressive in falling in love with her Master.

Even the upper-class girls who seem so secure when they are first encountered at Gateshead by Jane are subject to the same anxieties of femalehood she has known. With the decay of the family, the profligacy of the elder son, the imminent death of the mother, the attractive Georgiana is more obviously an absurd, indolent person without any futurity unless she secures an affluent husband. Her more serious sister makes a telling indictment of female dependency and offers a prescription for rational living and the pursuit of the work ethic that, even within the middle-class household, enabled women to escape the vanity and uselessness of their lives, the endless make-work of repetitious chores, the busyness of hands always employed, even in useless needlework. This statement by a minor character in Brontë's narrative is important, irrefutable:

> Georgiana, a more vain and absurd animal than you, was certainly never allowed to cumber the earth. You had no right to be born; for you make no use of life. Instead of living for, in, and with yourself, as a reasonable being ought, you seek only to fasten your feebleness on some other person's strength: if no one can be found willing to burden her or himself with such a fat, weak, puffy, useless thing, you cry out that you are ill-treated, neglected, miserable. Then, too, existence for you must be a scene of continued change and excitement, or else the world is a dungeon: you must be admired, you must be courted, you must be flattered—you must have music, dancing, and society—or you languish, you die away. Have you no sense to devise a system which will make you independent of all efforts and all wills but your own? Take one day; share it into sections; to each section aportion its task; leave no stray unemployed quarters of an hour, ten minutes, five minutes, include all; do each piece of business in its turn with method, with rigid regularity. The day will close almost before you are aware it has begun; and you are indebted to no one for helping you to get rid of one vacant moment; you have had to seek no one's company, conversation, sympathy, forbearance; you have lived, in short, as an independent being ought to do.

Such a desperate extreme of self-sufficiency is achieved within the bounds of the family at

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the cost of denying all dependencies of affection, however. After their mother's death, this pseudo-heroine of independence, completely washing her hands of any family claims, prepares to retire to a nunnery, renouncing marriage but also all ordinary social bonds. She and her sister are to be contrasted with those two other sisters who resemble Charlotte Brontë's own—the intelligent, generous-hearted Rivers girls who, when Jane first sees them, are studying German in order to prepare themselves as self-supporting single women, schoolteachers, or governesses.

The Rivers had been an old family, "gentry i' th' owd days o' th' Henrys," as the servant Hannah says. But now they were poor. "Mr. St. John, when he grew up, would go to college and be a parson; and the girls, as soon as they left school, would seek places as governesses; they had told her their father had some years ago lost a great deal of money, by a man he had trusted turning bankrupt; and as he was now not rich enough to give them fortunes, they must provide for themselves." And this, indeed, is what happens to Diana and Mary, with all the humiliating loss of dignity involved when they (daughters of the poorer north, like the Brontës) go to work for wealthy, fashionable families in "a south-of-England city, families, by whose wealthy and haughty members they were regarded only as humble dependents, and who neither knew nor sought one of their innate excellences, and appreciated only their acquired accomplishments as they appreciated the skill of their cook, or the taste of their waiting-women."

Charlotte Brontë's ideal of female selfhood cannot be realized simply by the attainment of economic independence, however. To Jane, St. John's loveless proposal is shocking. Spinsterhood is preferable, even if urealizable in the vocation he offers her, that of a foreign missionary. But spinsterhood is not what she is made for—and even when she becomes an heiress we know that her story is not done, that she must be reunited with Rochester. From the start it is evident that her passionate nature can only be satisfied in love, however much (with her plain appearance and unsubmissive temper) she may seem a destined spinster. Brontë wants to show that Jane's nature can give and take most fully only in the ardor of a passionate and equal relationship. So she makes her seek some other sphere beyond Lowood. She wants her heroine to meet the hero.

Jane Eyre, of course, is a highly original variation upon a genre made popular in the nineteenth century by the real problem of the displaced governess, romantic "governess novels" which solved her situation by marriage. In some of these, the poor governess, who, unlike Jane, is as winsome as she is attractive, simply achieves by charm and niceness the appropriate reward of marriage to a man of wealth. But there were other novels in which the governess heroine's career is religiously conceived as providential, a pilgrim's progress through trial and temptation towards vocation, generally marriage to a clergyman. Thackeray, in writing *Vanity Fair*, mocked the design of the providential governess novel in his title, while exhibiting a wicked and clever heroine who climbed into high society by marrying into her employer's family. Brontë, who found herself unable to dispense with a marriage ending, also married her unique heroine to her employer, but complicated that outcome by richly altering her character and her aims. Jane may be regarded as a Christiana of a sort who experiences doubt, revelations, and spiritual trial, but she rejects the providential governess novel's outcome in the form of St. John Rivers's proposal. Hers is a quest for selfhood and not religious duty. Her religion is love.

It is at Thornfield that Jane falls into a dream that denies the class barrier between herself and the man whom she, like the lower servants, calls "master" (she continues to call him this even when they have mutually admitted their love for each other). At the outset, Jane warns herself: "It does good to no woman to be flattered by her superior, who cannot possibly intend to marry her; and it is madness to all women to let a secret love kindle within them, which, if unreturned and unknown must devour the life that feeds it; and, if discovered and responded to, must lead, ignis-fatuus-like, into miry wilds whence there is no extrication." She tells herself to look honestly into her mirror and see there the type to which she belongs: "Portrait of a Governess, disconnected, poor, and plain." The first two attributes are social and economic, and the third prohibits the hope of any escape from such disadvantages. She reflects: "He is not of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

your order; keep to your caste; and be too self-respecting to lavish the love of the whole heart, soul, and strength, where such a gift is not wanted and would be despised." Later, when Jane is about to marry him, Mrs. Fairfax, the housekeeper who has a family connection with Rochester but seems to have accepted a lower-class status without complaint, tells Jane disapprovingly, "Try to keep Mr. Rochester at a distance; distrust yourself as well as him. Gentlemen in his station are not accustomed to marry their governesses."

Yet as her feelings for him grow greater and his interest in her begins to be evident, Jane makes the romantic claim, to herself, that class need not separate them after all. His upper-class friends have no real relation that can be compared with her own *natural* affinity to him:

> He is not to them what he is to me . . . he is not of their kind. I believe he is of mine,—I am sure he is,—I feel akin to him—I understand the language of his countenance and movements; though rank and wealth sever us widely, I have something in my brain and heart, in my blood and nerves, that assimilates me mentally to him. Did I say, a few days since, that I had nothing to do with him but to receive my salary at his hands? Did I forbid myself to think of him in any other light than as paymaster? Blasphemy against nature!

Of course, if it is blasphemy against "nature," it is also the social reality of class separation that only the romantic imagination can—in a fantasy—transcend. Brontë wants to see this transcendence take place, though she knows the unlikelihood of its realization in the real social world in which she had herself grown up. Jane must leave Rochester in order to understand this—not merely because he has betrayed her trust by concealing his marriage, but in order that she may experience to the utmost what her quest for independence might lead to. That abject poverty is a conceivable danger for Jane is shown in those astonishing pages in *Jane Eyre* during which, in flight from Thornfield, she wanders in the countryside for three days, starving, unable to find work or charity, suffering acutely all that loss of self, that separation from the roles and categories of society by which, alone, the self finds form.

These pages are powerful because the reader is compelled to learn, with Jane, what are the inescapable conditions of the very poor, to identify with those who have always lived at the bottom of society, those whose sufferings are more literal than mere nostalgia for lost status. And she must realize the inefficacy of the romantic will that aspires to freedom from social role and that would deny the force of any limitations or conditions altogether.

In Charlotte Brontë's own life, the quest for independence defined a role for women that had had only a few precedents till she and her sisters created it—that of a novelist with the highest artistic ambitions who was also successful in the market. In the case of her younger sisters, very early death cut off any hope of an erotic union that might combine with their desire for self-expression. Charlotte survived to fall in love, imprudently, with her married Belgian school principal, and she married only after selfhood—and her power as a producer of her own income as a writer—had been established. *Then* she married her father's curate, a marriage totally without romantic excess, a marriage if not of convenience, then of comfort. And isn't this the marriage Jane settles for, after all? She does not now need to marry in order to survive economically; she has, in a fairy-tale way, come into an unexpected legacy. But the Byronic glamour of Rochester is gone when Jane accepts him at last. He has been submitted to that necessary chastisement that has purged him of class and gender arrogance. His chastised maleness will look very much like a crippling, as, indeed, he is literally crippled. He is unable to see his wife, made blind to the visible world so that he may see more inwardly.

Jane Eyre is a novel that daringly confronts social reality yet opposes it with the author's utopianism. Jane is a realist, yet also utopian, romantic. Her creator desires her heroine's achievement of the utopian ideal of union in which men and women, rich and poor, are no longer categories separated by iron barriers. Yet the writer's truth-admitting sense is so great that she cannot, after all, award her heroine an unqualified victory. Brontë's ending secures her heroine, grants her independence in the only way that society as well as romance sanctioned it. When she inherits an unexpected fortune from her uncle, she also immediately releases those duplications of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

herself, the Rivers sisters, from enslavement as governesses. And because fairy-tale cannot altogether die, she marries at last the upper-class gentleman with whom she had fallen in love. But perhaps he has become her providential destiny, too, her unforeseen duty. The subdued Rochester, broken in body and dimmed in spirit, will, with her help, regain some if not all of his former powers. But it may be that one can regard this "happy ending," along with other arbitrary improbabilities in the plot of *Jane Eyre*, as less important than the character of the heroine in whom the will to independence persists to the end.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Rose Is a Rose Is a Rose

JACK MYERS

Well, I guess I ended up
buying myself a rose.
I was about to give it to her
when she called and said
"I have to think about us."
I already did that—not stripping
the thorns off the rose
because I knew it'd be tough
with us, not forcing it open
with warm water and air
because I wanted us to open
right along with it
before I bought another
and another to remind me
to keep opening. Well, it's opened
now, looks like an old sympathy card,
the kind I never bought because
it was so clichéd it had already opened
onto the next one about gathering dust.
She said she'd have to think about us,
but it's over, and I don't want
to make it tough on her, make her
call and decline though I know
she'd be—I almost said "kind."
I almost bought her a baker's dozen
which she'd consider inappropriate
since there was no occasion,
and I didn't want to overwhelm her
with a dozen deep red feelings.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

She doesn't know about my rose,
nor my rose about her. And that's how
it should be: dignified, accepting
of what cannot be. I should call
and leave my good-bye on the machine
she's screened me out with ("Hey!
This is Rosa! It's all yours!").
Say, "Hey! Rosa! It's all yours!
I thought about what you're thinking
and I'm face-to-face with your rose."
God, what I'd give to feel like that.

✪ JACK MYERS teaches creative writing at Southern Methodist University and in the Vermont College MFA Writing Program. His latest book is *Blindsided* (David Godine, 1993).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Is God Really Dead in Beverly Hills?

Religion and the Movies

STANLEY ROTHMAN

In recent years at least two films have treated the Christian religion and those who practice it with reasonable respect. *Black Robe* (1991), a film about Jesuit missionaries to the Indians in what is now Canada, treats a Jesuit priest, one of the major characters in the film, as a person of sincere humility and deep belief. On the other hand, the Hurons, the recipients of his mission, are all but destroyed as the result of his efforts to convert them. *Shadowlands* (1993), a fictional biography of C. S. Lewis, takes Lewis and his Christian beliefs seriously, though he is something of a maverick, and the Christian message he delivers periodically to audiences of middle-aged women is presented as thin and contrived. Theoretically, it will be less so in the future (as the picture ends) because, after a tragic loss, he, the Lewis of the movie, finally opens himself to life.

Other films, of course, have presented religion or religious characters in a positive light. On the whole, however, religious themes have played rather poorly in Hollywood movies for the past forty years. In their efforts to entertain large audiences, moviemakers have, since 1965, largely ignored traditional religious themes, dwelling on demonic forces or manifestations of the supernatural that bear little or no relationship to traditional Jewish or Christian stories. The parade of epic biblical films—such as those of Cecil B. De Mille—that packed the theaters before 1965 disappeared in the second half of the decade and have never returned.

Given the overwhelmingly non-religious orientations of Hollywood's contemporary artists, none of this is surprising. In spite of the fact that traditional religion is still important to the vast majority of Americans, recent movies are no longer concerned with traditional religious topics and biblical storytelling.

Most of the few notable exceptions—for example, Monty Python's *Life of Brian* (1979) and Martin Scorsese's *Last Temptation of Christ* (1988), have taken such satiric or radical directions that the Catholic church and other religious groups have sharply criticized them. Even when movies seem to present a favorable image of Western religious beliefs—as in *Oh God!* (1977), for example—the deity is seen, at best, from a Unitarian perspective, and representatives of older religious traditions, if not benighted, are given short shrift.

In *Hollywood vs. America*, the movie critic Michael Medved argues that, while movies concentrating on religious topics might still draw large audiences if they were more orthodox in outlook, filmmakers have emphasized irreverent accounts of the life of Christ, and these have usually "flopped resoundingly at the box office." The majority of movies depicting the afterlife or any kind of supernatural force seem to reflect a Hollywood preoccupation with satanic evil, religious satire, conflict between individuals and supernatural evil that lacks a religious referent, and interaction with benevolent or evil extraterrestrials. These newer box office hits are aimed at today's youth market, and their treatment of religion is obviously quite different from what Hollywood offered in the past.

✪ STANLEY ROTHMAN is Mary Huggins Gamble Professor of Government Emeritus at Smith College and the director of the Center for the Study of Social and Political Change. This essay is part of a larger study of motion pictures and social change in the United States.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A few years ago a *Time* magazine writer, arguing that Hollywood was becoming interested in religion again following such hits as *Field of Dreams* and *Ghost*, suggested that

the preoccupation with the afterlife reflects the obsession of Los Angeles, the crystal-and-channeling capital of the country, where people can mention their past lives with the same seriousness as getting the car engine tuned. No doubt Shirley MacLaine's philosophical musings and Richard Gere's cassette-tape readings from the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* have permeated the collective unconscious of fortysomething producers forced to face mortality through the death of their parents and the tragic toll of colleagues who have died of AIDS.

Moviemakers have transformed customary religious storytelling in three important ways. First, they have reoriented religious movies toward the darker side of spiritual belief. Conventional religious beliefs are presented but only to provide a recognizable background against which evil can be made more compelling and powerful. Beginning with Roman Polanski's *Rosemary's Baby* (1968), Hollywood's new generation of filmmakers abandoned conventional religious stories and began churning out movies exhibiting a fascination with evil. A slew of movies about the devil or other demonic or magical forces at work on Earth sprang forth, bringing impressive returns from the new cineplexes operating in malls across the country. People sat in theaters, drive-ins, or more recently in their own living rooms, fascinated at the spectacle of demonic forces overtaking unfortunate victims for no apparent reason. The effect on audiences of such movies as *The Exorcist* (1974) was clearly substantial. Owing to their appealing imagery, such movies made for a number of box-office hits in the seventies. Special effects improved as audiences refined their appetite for the nightmarish amusement park rides that the new genre offered.

In the early seventies, a number of movies began to satirize the practices of organized religions as archaic and authoritarian, if not merely silly. Satire is perhaps the least prevalent of the themes, and the criticisms of religious practices or characters portrayed as religious are often fairly subtle. Fairly typical examples are *Tommy* (1975) and *The Witches of Eastwick* (1987); the latter comically sympathizes with the devil, and those who are aware of the presence of evil in the small town come to a bad end.

Using very sophisticated techniques, moviemakers have reformulated the natural and supernatural worlds, exploring different kinds of realities that include elements of religion, magic, mysticism, horror, science-fiction, and the occult, which have little or no connection with traditional religious orientations. In a number of these films, one finds increasing ambiguity in the portrayal of good and evil.

In these movies, evil is not always defeated by story's end, and this is not simply to leave an opening for sequels. The stories frequently make a point of demonstrating that evil is beyond control and that we can all become its helpless victims. In some of these movies, Hollywood presents a mixture of natural and supernatural occurrences in the same story, without drawing any clear lines between the two realms. In *The Golden Child* (1986), for example, the forces of good and evil are at play in the natural world and a select few individuals are empowered by them, influencing events both natural and supernatural. In *Beetlejuice* (1988) the afterlife is merely a ghostly and grotesque extension of natural existence in which the living and the dead are able to commingle. In the comedy *Ghostbusters* (1984), the line between the supernatural and natural is very thin, but the supernatural world has nothing to do with traditional religious beliefs. One finds the same pattern in such films as *The Shining* (1980) or *Poltergeist* (1982). The inability finally to defeat evil is further illustrated by the *Nightmare on Elm Street* or the *Friday the 13th* series of movies of the 1980s. Most of these films, while assuming the existence of the supernatural, have nothing to do with traditional Western religious themes.

A distinct variant of the supernatural films draws from the science fiction genre, presuming the existence of supernatural powers in outer space. *Star Wars* and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* conjure up supernatural forces from the ruins of the religious sentiments of a bygone era in Hollywood. In these films, moviemakers have replaced God with less omnipotent forces. Nevertheless, the spectacle of brilliant alien technology, far more sophisticated than anything on Earth, does have some parallels to biblical accounts of celestial phe-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nomena. Michael Pye and Lynda Myles, in their discussion of *Close Encounters,* observe:

> These wheels of light careening through the sky have their historic parallels: the visions of the prophet Ezekiel, the idea of the chariot of God, the mandals of Jung. The fiery clouds of biblical texts become the boiling clouds and blinding light of Spielberg's film. Intervention from above, bringing hope at last, is a constant theme at times of social crisis and change. Some God must save us, because we cannot save ourselves. And if God is an alien, with lights and wonder and color and music, then God is prettier than we thought.

Contemporary science fiction films are important to a discussion of Hollywood's treatment of religion because they do more than confront us with the possibility of other life forms. If this were the only message conveyed, the films would be less uplifting and entertaining. While sidestepping the issue of whether traditional beliefs about God and heaven have validity, at least some of these films comfort us with the thought that benevolent beings from outer space watch over us. In a sense, they suggest that although Western society, built around scientific and rational principles, must inevitably relinquish its hold on ancient biblical accounts of the meaning of life, we can nonetheless still hope for salvation from above.

This hope does not always require the moral virtue once expected of religious characters. It is Everyman's salvation. *Cocoon* (1985), like *Star Wars* and *Close Encounters,* conveys exactly this message. Regardless of the kind of lives they have led, the old folks in *Cocoon* will be taken by the aliens to a place where they'll never get any older and never die. For these lucky individuals salvation is no longer contingent upon predestination, faith, or good works, though it might require being in the right place at the right time.

Stanley Kubrick, alluding to the new trend among science fiction films in a discussion of *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), remarked: "The God concept is at the heart of the film." David Bowman becomes "an enhanced human being, a star child, a superhuman . . . returning to earth prepared for the next leap forward of man's evolutionary destiny." Kubrick's idiosyncratic view of religion retains only the scientific concepts of evolution and our experiences with space travel—and nothing divine or spiritual at all.

In a similar vein, Luke Skywalker of the *Star Wars* trilogy (1977, 1980, 1983) relies on a naturalistic kind of power derived from all living things in the universe, which is known simply as "The Force." The power of The Force transcends our ordinary conception of natural death because Ben (Obi-Wan Kenobe) continues to be seen as an apparition instructing Luke on how to use his power; The Force is not quite equivalent to a divine power either, however, since it originates in nature and therefore has a certain scientific plausibility. Ben explains: "It's an energy field created by all living things." It surrounds us, it penetrates us, it binds the galaxy together."

Of course, at least some science fiction movies, including such films as *Alien* (1979), deal with powerful evil forces that cannot be finally vanquished. Science fiction movies wrestle with many of the same issues that used to be dealt with in films emphasizing traditional religious beliefs.

What is it that makes Hollywood so averse to a more frequent and more positive treatment of traditional religion? Why, even in the face of what appears to be a strong market potential, have Hollywood writers, directors, and producers avoided this particular mainstream of Western beliefs? Do they hold a grudge against the institutions that have constrained their expression in the past? This, in part, is Michael Medved's argument. Constrained only by the demands of the marketplace, Hollywood producers, actors, and writers attack bourgeois American culture and religion because they hate both.

Perhaps. But one does not detect much open hostility to traditional religion in popular Hollywood movies—only, at worst, a decline in the sanctity of religion as a subject compelling interest on its own. While this indicates a disregard for religion as an important institution, lack of interest, rather than deep hostility, seems to be the rule. Because of their secular views, filmmakers may simply be so intrigued by other alternatives that they do not wish to return to earlier types of religious storytelling.

In any case, religion has fallen even further out of fashion than the Western, which is currently enjoying a modest comeback. To understand these recent trends in popular enter-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tainment it is important first to document the changes that I have just described.

To talk usefully about the major themes of motion pictures it is necessary to analyze a representative sample of films. My colleagues at the Center for the Study of Social and Political Change and I sampled the ten top-grossing films for each year from 1946 to 1990, a total of 440 films. After completing the study, we took a sample of 21 of the ten top-grossing films for each year from 1990 to 1994. We did not include these in our statistical analysis but found few differences from earlier films. The actual number of films viewed for the period 1946 to 1990 was 159.

We maintain that choosing films viewed by large audiences gives us a better handle on the nature and role of the film industry than choosing a sampling of the total product of that industry. It is our considered opinion, incidentally, that a sample of the total production of Hollywood would have more strongly validated our hypotheses as to the changing nature of the film industry and its products than the sample we actually chose.

Rather than analyzing films as literary works, we conducted a systematic content analysis of social and political themes in them. Our goal was to develop methods for counting themes in motion pictures that would enable us to make supportable generalizations about them. College students were hired to view films and code themes. Initially, a select sample of films was coded by two persons. Only those categories or themes on which agreement was achieved 80 percent or more of the time were retained for further analysis. For some purposes our unit of analysis was the film as a whole. In general, however, we coded all the significant characters in each film.

Many of the themes were quite simple. To take materials of relevance to this essay, students were asked to count the number of films in which some version of the Jewish or Christian God appeared or in which some version of the devil was presented. They were also asked to count the number of persons in films who were identified as members of traditional religious groups, or as members of the clergy. They counted how frequently characters achieved their goals, and how the film evaluated their moral character (positivly, negatively, or mixed).

There are weaknesses to this approach. Some more complicated themes in individual films can be missed, and, if not used with care, one can overstate the certainty of results. The method certainly gives no clues as to the subtlety of a given movie or any hint about whether or not it may be enjoyable.

Our systematic content analysis of movies that deal with religious themes is rather straightforward and supports our qualitative discussion. It served, indeed, as the basis for it.

Looking at the religious composition of characters, we find that the number of characters in movies actually identified as practicing one religion or another has declined dramatically since the 1940s. In the 1945 to 1956 decade, 19 percent of the characters in major motion pictures were Protestants, Catholics, Jews, or some other identifiable religion. Eighty-one percent were unknown, atheist, or agnostic.

In the second decade under study, the number of religious characters drops slightly lower, to 15 percent. In the third decade the figure drops to nine percent, and in the 1976 to 1990 period it declines even further, to about 4 percent whose religious orientation is identified in the movie. As we shall see, the proportion of films in which God or God's agents play a role also drops very sharply.

When we compare the small group of characters identified as Protestant, Catholic, or Jewish with all other characters, we find a consistent pattern. In the first two decades, the character ratings (positive, negative, mixed) of the major characters identified with these religions are somewhat more likely to be positive than those of persons not identified with them. In the first decade, 81 percent of these characters are rated positively compared with only 63 percent of non-religiously identified characters. In the second decade, positive ratings decline slightly, to 74 percent, but are still higher for religious than for non-religious characters, only 48 percent of whom are characterized positively. In the third decade, positive ratings among religiously identified characters decline to 67 percent, but they are still higher than those for non-religious characters, who remain at 48 percent positive characterization. In the fourth decade, however, religious characters nearly reach an equilibrium with non-religious characters, slipping to 56 percent positive, while positive ratings for non-religious characters rise slightly, to 52

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

percent. As compared to earlier decades, the declining number of religious characters are now no more likely than non-religious characters to be portrayed positively.

In the same vein, the percentages of religiously identified characters who fail to achieve their goals has risen during recent decades. This corresponds with our impression of a declining power of religion in predetermining the intentions, actions, and outcomes of religious characters. In the first decade, only 15 percent of the characters with religious ties are unsuccessful compared with 31 percent of non-religious characters. In the second decade, 26 percent fail to achieve their goals compared to 33 percent of non-religious characters. In the third decade, 23 percent of the religious fail to achieve their objectives compared to 33 percent of non-religious characters. The greatest change occurs in the most recent period. Now the number of religious characters who fail to achieve their goals rises to 36 percent compared to only 28 percent of non-religious defeated characters. Religious affiliation today actually seems to increase the likelihood that a character will fail to achieve her or his objectives.

Evaluating an even more narrow group of religious characters—religious workers, nuns, and missionaries—we find further evidence of the declining prestige of religious institutions in Hollywood movies. Among these, character ratings are, with only one exception, entirely positive in the first two decades, but they fall markedly in the last two. From 1946 to 1965, sixteen of seventeen religious workers are rated positively and the one exception (Dr. Hewitt, from *The Sandpiper)* receives a mixed rather than a negative rating. In the third decade, positive depictions decline to four out of seven, or only 57 percent positive. The remaining three (43 percent) are presented negatively. In the most recent decade, only three of six religious workers are presented positively, two are represented as negative characters, and one receives a mixed rating.

We find the same pattern in the presentation of attaining goals. In the first decade, either all the religious workers succeed in achieving their objectives or some of the issues remain unresolved. In the second decade, 86 percent score similarly. Since this was the era of biblical epics, a disproportionate number of religious characters are persecuted. Mitigating against this lower success rate is the image of Jews and Christians serving a higher purpose. We must also bear in mind that, in spite of their predicaments, these characters are still overwhelmingly presented in a positive fashion corresponding with their moral virtue.

In the third decade, though portrayals of religious workers are substantially less positive, 85 percent are still either successful or the outcome of their efforts is at least ambiguous. It is not until the most recent period that we find a precipitous decline. From 1976 to 1990, only 17 percent of the few religious workers in our sample meet with success. Whereas none of the religious workers are defeated in the first decade and only 14 percent fail to achieve their objectives in the second and third decades, 50 percent fail in the most recent period and in 33 percent the results are ambiguous. While somewhat more ambivalent character ratings emerge among religious workers in the second and the third decades, they are still overwhelmingly successful in attaining their objectives until the most recent period, at which time the character ratings of religious workers continue to decline, and failure to achieve goals increases dramatically.

Overall, traditional religious figures in the movies have suffered a multiple decline. They were once presented very positively, consistent with the reverence for religious institutions mandated by the Hollywood Production Code. Since the mid-sixties, their reputation has become less exalted. The larger story of what has happened to religion in popular movies must be understood in light of a sharply diminished presence of religious characters. Yet, at the same time, the decline of traditional religion has been accompanied by the increasing presentation of alternate sources of supernatural events.

Our thematic analysis of films, designed to measure broader trends in motion pictures, suggests the magnitude of the shift from traditional religious to alternative supernatural themes. Supernatural events occur in only a few movies from 1946 to 1975 (nine movies, or 10 percent on average); however, in the 1976 to 1990 period alone, 14 movies (26 percent of the total movies coded for that period) had such events. Among such films, the trend is away from more traditional depictions of God and religion. In the first two decades, God is present in five of seven movies with

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

supernatural events; in the period from 1966 to 1990, God is present in only two of sixteen.

Conversely, the devil is not present in any of the seven movies from the first two decades but is present in three of sixteen films in the two more recent periods. Even more interesting is the fact that extraterrestrials, absent from top-grossing movies over the thirty years from 1946 to 1976, are the source of supernatural events in five of the fourteen (36 percent) films in which such events occur from 1976 to 1990. Forty-three percent of the films involve supernatural forces that have no relationship to any of these categories. Magic, for good or ill, permeates the universe. Together these trends clearly demonstrate the decline of traditional depictions of God and religion, and a growing interest in movies that present supernatural events as demonic or extraterrestrial. Clearly, the development of space travel in the real world, as well as the increasing ability of Hollywood's technicians to simulate events in outer space, has also played a role in the growth of this genre.

In the movies of the studio era, religion was granted an especially high status; it was an institution upon which both heroic and ordinary characters relied for support. Religion held a special power over the lives of the faithful that was thought to enable them to accomplish or to endure things that others could not. Consequently, not only religious workers, but also other characters holding religious beliefs, were portrayed favorably more often than the non-religious. These characters were also more successful in achieving their objectives by story's end. Although religion itself may not have been at issue in many of these movies, its moral influence on the characters was clear and pronounced.

In biblical stories, the Judeo-Christian religious heritage is presented as the progress of humanity against barbarism and evil. God empowers various characters to protect and lead the righteous. Those who oppose God's plan meet with disaster. The power of religion over characters in more modern settings remained overwhelmingly positive in the studio days. Religion provides a source of strength to those who believe, and these believers make the world a better place. The Production Code and the Hollywood mogul's conservative control over the industry mandated this kind of representation, but, importantly, these movies were also harmonious with American religious sensibilities and remained very popular.

The elimination of censorship and other changes within the movie industry and American society in the sixties and seventies resulted in the replacement of these films with much more ambiguous representations of a declining number of religious characters. Perhaps even more significant, Hollywood movies now also express a much greater apprehension about the presence of evil in the world—satanic evil as well as other forms of supernatural evil. While the forces of evil have multiplied in recent years in popular movies, there has been less good in the world, either supernatural or human, to combat it. Characters seldom expect divine or supernatural intervention, or rely on the power of religious institutions to deliver them from supernatural evil. As a result, in many movies characters have much less control over their lives.

Hollywood's new mythos has freed characters in movies from much of the restraint imposed by religious customs, as it has freed them from other restraints on behavior, but this has left these characters vulnerable to unknown, usually uncontrollable evil. The supernaturalism that has replaced the authoritative religious storytelling of the past seems to reflect Hollywood's own agnostic torment. Having abandoned so much of religious tradition, Hollywood is unable to offer compelling and authoritative alternatives. The kinds of movies that have filled the void have not ignored religion altogether but instead have re-created it in such a way that it loses much of its previously affirmative value. Whether movies shape or merely reflect our collective hopes or fears about this life or the next, Hollywood has conjured up a predominantly nightmarish alternative to more traditional stories.

Part of this trend may be a matter of choice on the part of a secular motion picture industry. And yet one suspects there is something more going on, both in the choice of plots and in their popularity among mass audiences. In *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* (1976), Bruno Bettelheim argues that the violence of fairy tales—and they can be very violent—serves a useful function. Children need to be assured that if they act at the behest of powerful, violent, anti-social impulses within them,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

they will be destroyed by the more powerful magical forces of good. In this way they come to identify with such forces and to turn their violent proclivities to socially responsible tasks. Self-control—the development of a superego—is thus fostered and children can become more or less comfortable with their impulses.

Insofar as we never fully succeed in mastering our violent anti-social drives, and insofar as the child continues to function within the adult, it can be argued that most human beings require some mythic structure if they are to function effectively as responsible adults. The myth of the inevitable triumph of good over evil may seem simpleminded to the sophisticated Hollywood producers and directors, who believe that they themselves do not need such myths. They are, in fact, little different from the audiences they serve. They cannot find a satisfactory substitute for religion, though they continue to try. Their failure is reflected in a plethora of films that document the triumph of evil, an evil which, as in *Alien*, often emerges from the bowels of the victim. One suspects that these themes are, at least partially, symbolic of a feared loss of control of the evil impulses within the self.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MEMOIR

The White Woods

MICHELLE BOBIER

At this moment I am visiting, in memory, my family's vacation cottage in the north woods of Michigan. It is many years ago, during my childhood, and it is raining. On such days most of us stay in the cottage; only my father finds endless reasons to be outside when it rains here. I can look out the windows and see him as he goes about his chores, busy and happy, swathed in rain gear.

I am lounging in front of the fire, reading, drinking hot cocoa. I savor these things: the fire, burning cleanly with wood my father has cut, within the fireplace he and two friends built out of stone they gathered from Lake Huron; the smell of wood smoke, and the sound of snapping sparks as the fire laps up pine sap; the doze-inducing warmth dispelling the chill of the rain-soaked air; the distinct sound of the rain on the roof, steady, then slackening, then picking up again; the sight of the lake, gray with storm, and the sound of its surf against the rocky beach; the ebb and flow of the wind in the trees; the taste of the cocoa, and the deliciously sticky feel of the floating marshmallows. Most of all, the feeling of justified indolence, utter stability, and a contentment that goes so deep it is almost a state of grace.

After a while there is the crunch of footsteps on the gravel outside, then the sound of booted feet on the tiny wooden stoop. I look up, and there is my father. He brings with him a swirl of damp, cleansed air, and he stands by the door, dripping rain, smiling, smelling of woods.

It seems to me that the elements of my father's life were bound together by trees. He needed to live among trees, surrounded by them, and in those times when he was forced to exist without them—without the woods—he felt a longing and a restlessness and an uprootedness, poignant, powerful feelings that could not go long without remedy.

This passion for trees must have begun in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, where Dad was born. His home town was St. Ignace, at the northern terminus of the Mackinac Bridge. Nowadays St. Ignace is a fairly sizable place, but in 1908, the year of my father's birth, it was a tiny village surrounded by woodsy wilderness. The Upper Peninsula is home to deciduous trees of great variety: walk in the woods and you will find cedar, birch, beech, oak, maple, aspen, poplar, spruce, several different kinds of pine. This was where my father was born and where he grew up, breathing north-woods air that smelled of pine and cedar and Lake Huron, a clear blue-green smell, and hearing, everywhere, the murmuring language of trees. The sound of tree-life was part of his family's life, and of his own.

When the Depression came, Dad's family (father and mother and seven children, some of them grown) moved to Flint, in the Lower Peninsula. They went partly because my grandmother wanted to be near her sisters, who lived there, and partly because work was there, work in the automotive plants that even then had become Flint's main industry, nearly its only one (fifty years later, we would come to learn what a liability that was).

My father found work in one of "the plants," as we always called them when I, many years later, was growing up in Flint. His time in the plant was long before the Environmental Protection Agency, before the Clean Air Act, before worker's compensation. I remember him telling me about those days: how the air inside

---

✪ MICHELLE BOBIER's work has appeared in THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, the *Virginia Quarterly Review*, and elsewhere.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the plant was thick with a fog of dust and smoke and fumes and vaporized metal; how he went to his foreman one day to ask if the company could at least install exhaust fans to reduce the amount of airborne irritants the workers had to inhale; how the foreman simply looked at him and said, "Bobier, if you don't want this job, there are plenty of other guys who do." It was the Depression. Dad went back to work.

What must it have been like for his family to leave a north-woods village and go to an industrial city? What must it have been like for my father suddenly to be living in a place where most of the trees had been cut down? Where he worked in a deafening, mephitic atmosphere that set him up for pulmonary tuberculosis?

He spent months in a sanitarium. Then, in order to pursue the "fresh air cure"—which, as it turns out, has a sound basis, for cold kills tuberculosis bacilli—he went to the wild banks of the Au Sable River and lived there, in a tent, for a year, surrounded by water, trees, and silence. He was twenty-one years old. He went into town occasionally for supplies, but otherwise supported himself by hunting and fishing. My father always had an affinity for the Au Sable, returning there many times over the ensuing decades for camping and fishing trips, and no wonder: that wilderness saved his life.

Especially after that formative, healing event, what did it do to him not to have the woods?

Being dug up and transplanted is not an easy thing from which to recover, particularly if the roots are deep and firm. My father eventually became a successful attorney (he had devoted much of his year on the river to reading law), then a respected judge; the transplant took. But there was always a part of Dad that was still uprooted, seeking the woods, needing to get back there.

He partly filled that need when he and my mother bought property on Bois Blanc Island, in the Straits of Mackinac, within sight of St. Ignace. When my brother was very young, he suffered elaborately from a number of allergies, including a complex of them lumped together under the category of hay fever. So severe were his symptoms that my parents, at times, feared for his life. The family doctor advised them to take my brother, during the worst times, to the north country, where, unless you happen to be sensitive to pine pollen, there tend to be relatively few airborne allergens. So my mother and father built a cottage in a clearing on the Island. The front of the cottage is a dozen yards from Lake Huron. The other three sides are surrounded by trees.

Bois Blanc, "white woods," is an accurate description of the Island, which is covered with trees, many of them white-barked birches. Very quickly, the Island became Dad's place. All of us loved it there, but he seemed to inhabit it more fully than the rest of us. (Because of that, several years passed after my father's death before my brother and sister and I could bear to go back there.)

On the Island, my father was himself, but more so—himself, but freed. He was constantly up and doing there, fishing, hunting, trekking along the rocky beach with his children, and always, always, walking in the woods. Dad wanted to spend as much time on the Island as possible. He was forever wanting all of us to pack up and go to the Island on weekends, often on the spur of the moment—exasperating times for my mother, who was invariably responsible for getting all of us and our belongings together for the considerable expedition involved. But my father needed those trips, for the Island of White Woods replenished him in a way that was almost mystical: when he was there, he was no longer uprooted. Only now am I beginning, a little, to understand this.

He needed that periodic replenishment to sustain him through his life in Flint. The city was growing bigger all the time, and the more city there was, the less there was of nature, and the more alien the place became to a boy from St. Ignace. Moreover, Flint contained my grandfather.

My mother's parents lived near us. Our house, in fact, was built on a parcel of acreage that was part of their farm until my parents bought it from them. This proximity enabled Grampa to loom over us like an active volcano, at whose foot we apprehensively dwelled.

Rarely have I encountered anyone as volatile, as intrusive, and as dedicated to control as my grandfather. Each year the advent of Spring would find us, particularly my mother, in a state of pervasive anxiety as we anticipated the arrival of my grandparents from their win-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ter home in Florida. It was not wise, funny, sustaining Gramma we dreaded; it was Grampa, who would move into their house and then into our lives. He was relentless, overwhelming.

He also was beyond our resistance. That was because of a taboo my father shared with his brothers and sisters, a taboo that prohibited all familial conflict. Anything was preferable to conflict: any misbehavior, any abuse, any degree of frustration. And so my father, who loved all of us almost beyond comprehension, nevertheless forbade us to resist Grampa. Awakening us kids with early-morning telephone calls in order to quiz us with arithmetic problems, coming over to the house unannounced whenever he pleased, subjecting us to a constant flow of criticism and denigration, attempting to exert totalitarian control over our lives (threatening to disinherit us if we failed to bow to his will was a favorite tactic), showing all of us, in hundreds of ways both large and small, a nearly perfect lack of respect—all my grandfather's sorties against my family had to be tolerated, none could be resisted. This caused great stress within my family, and no small amount of bitterness within my mother. By then she had grown strong enough to stand up to Grampa, had she been permitted. But my father would not permit.

The bizarre relationship between my grandfather and my family affected Dad in some very specific ways. Because my father so loved trees, he was prone to protecting and defending them. I think Grampa knew this about Dad, and used it against him.

As a farmer, my grandfather fought trees all his life. He was never part of the school of farming that befriends Nature. He viewed farming as total war. He saw trees as obstacles that took up valuable acreage. He made profligate use of environmentally damaging chemical fertilizers. He insisted on weed-free fields, and liberally used chemical warfare to achieve that end. (Once, deeply offended by the crabgrass, dandelion, and thistle that comprised much of our lawn, he came over while we were away and, in violation of my mother's expressed wishes, sprayed our yard with some sort of toxic weed killer. When I went into the yard after arriving home and promptly broke out in an itchy red rash, Mom instantly knew who was responsible.)

And he destroyed trees. In one of Grampa's fields, the one on the other side of the creek that ran in front of our house, stood a magnificent oak tree, a hundred years old at the very least. It had stood in that field, green and graceful, all the years Grampa had owned the farm—at that point, probably thirty years or more. We saw that tree every day as we looked out our front windows or traversed the winding lane that was our driveway. The oak was part of our lives, a silent companion that had been there before any of us came into being, leafing out in Spring, dropping its foliage in Autumn, leaving us to watch over it as it slept through the dark and frozen months, year after year.

One day, Grampa sent a hired man to visit that tree. The man had been instructed to girdle it, that is, to remove a strip of bark from it, all the way round, down to the bare wood. After that is done to a tree, the nutrients cannot travel from the roots to the upper part. The tree dies.

When my father, on his way home from work, saw what Grampa had done, saw the pale, oozing gash violating the great trunk, he came into the house wearing a facial expression I had never seen on him before, and never saw again. Grief, rage, anguished frustration at an irreparable and senseless loss—all that was there.

He fought back. He didn't do so by confronting Grampa, for that would have broken the taboo. Instead, he hired a tree surgeon.

The tree surgeon attended to the oak a number of times. He painted the wound with creosote to stop the oozing and discourage insects; he tried grafts in an attempt to bridge the girdled area and encourage new growth over it. It was all hopeless, and I think my father knew it, but he had to try. He tried until leaves withered and branches began to die.

I'm sure we would all have felt less pain if we had looked out the window one day and noticed that the oak was gone, simply and suddenly felled. It was so much harder to watch that tree slowly starve, to watch it die bit by little bit, almost like a person with a slow, wasting illness, and it was hardest of all for my father. At last, he had the tree cut down.

At another point—this was before the oak incident—my father decided to plant one of our fields with pine trees. I remember some talk about this serving as a Christmas tree

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

farm, but I don't think Dad's motive was profit: I think it was the need for trees. He bought hundreds of pine seedlings and had them planted.

My grandfather was outraged. He hadn't much cared during the years when there had been nothing in that field but weeds. He previously had made it known that he would have preferred that my parents plant the acreage in corn or barley or something, but he hadn't particularly fussed about the field not being farmed. When those pine trees went in, though, Grampa ranted about what "a bunch of goddamn foolishness" it was to "waste" that field.

My parents tried to ignore him; it was, after all, their field, on their property.

There came a time when my family was away on vacation. When we pulled up to the house on our return, Dad looked out at his Christmas tree farm. He opened the door of the station wagon, got out, and then, saying nothing, leaving the car door open, he walked out to the pine field.

He walked out to the pine field to find all his little trees uprooted. During our absence, Grampa had sent someone over to plow the whole thing under. My father stood in the middle of the field, looking around him; then he sat on the ground, on the broken earth, and held uprooted, dying, baby trees in his hands, and wept.

Several years ago, my father died; we buried him under the sheltering limbs of a pine tree. Not long afterward my mother, who was then in her early seventies, decided she no longer wanted to keep the Island property. She thought it would be good to keep it in the family, though, and offered me the chance to buy it from her. In a state of near-panic at the thought of the Island ceasing to be part of our family's life, I accepted my mother's offer. So now I own the cottage and its land. What was Dad's place is now mine, and I'm responsible for it.

The responsibility, it turns out, is not a small one. During the years when we all stayed away from the place after my father's death, the property fell into disrepair, which must now be remedied. This is complicated, as everything must be done long-distance. It takes something like twelve hours to drive from Chicago to Cheboygan, Michigan, take a ferry across the Straits, and then drive to the cottage. Going to the Island and back is not something that can be done in a weekend, as we used to do when my family lived in Flint. Fortunately, our Island neighbors are an enterprising family adept at contracting the work for me and seeing each project through to completion. Bit by bit, the necessary work is being done.

My neighbors asked me a while back if I were interested in selling. (In addition to owning the small Island general store, the grocery, the motel, the gasoline pumps, and one of the ferry services, they are also realtors.) I didn't blame them for asking; certainly, selling would be more convenient, not to mention more lucrative, but I said no. I have plans for the place. Eventually I would like to go up to the Island two or three times a year, for a week or two at a time, alone or with my husband or with other family members. It's a good place to recover, should one need recovery; a good place to think; a good place to walk in the woods.

I did not mention earlier that my father eventually replanted his Christmas tree farm. That time, Grampa left it alone. (A sweet victory for Dad. After the first time, my mother went over to my grandparents' house and told Grampa what she thought of him for doing what he had done. She waited until my father was at work to do this; he never knew she had violated the taboo.) Those trees grew into quite a little forest there in the suburbs of Flint. When the trees began to reach a certain size, we got our Christmas trees from that field. (Artificial trees were never even considered; we regarded them with contempt; the very concept was incomprehensible.) My father loved going out there with my older sister and me, and later on just me, and choosing a tree and chopping it down himself and then dragging it back to the house. I always wanted something with a little drama—a feathery white pine, perhaps, or a deeply colored spruce—but Dad always wanted a balsam. These were not favorites with the rest of us because of their propensity for almost immediate, copious shedding of their needles. Balsams, though, are highly aromatic. They had, for my father, the right smell.

The Island has the right smell for me. It smells of water and pine, of family and rest. It smells of Dad. My struggle to keep the Island

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

property is a continuation of my father's battle for rootedness; my connection with this place connects me with him. It is an echo of his own efforts to remain linked to the north woods and anchored to his truest self. This place, this green-roofed cottage, this vast blue lake, these innumerable murmuring trees—they were part of Dad and, through an inheritance of love and grief and history, they are part of me. This is the core of it, the reason I insist upon keeping in my life this faraway island that is so hard for me to reach, physically, but so accessible to my mind and heart and spirit. I cannot give up the white woods.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Margaret Fuller

The American Mind Writ Large

TESS LEWIS

The greatest poverty is not to live
In a physical world, to feel that one's desire
Is too difficult to tell from despair.
—Wallace Stevens, "Esthétique du Mal"

"The men thought she carried too many guns," wrote Ralph Waldo Emerson of his friend Margaret Fuller. Unlike many of Fuller's male peers, he was not intimidated by her intelligence and forthrightness; but then Emerson was not easily intimidated. He did find her voracious appetite for friendship overwhelming and was repeatedly forced to fend off her attempts to draw him into a greater intimacy than he was constitutionally capable of sustaining—besides, he thought her extremely plain and worried that she made him laugh too much. She later proved a central force in his intellectual life, and on learning of her premature death, he lamented, "I have lost in her my audience."

"What a Sphynx is that girl! Who shall solve her?" exclaimed another of Fuller's good friends. From her birth in 1810 until well after her death in 1850, Fuller's family and friends struggled to fit her onto various Procrustean beds. Her father, Timothy Fuller, an independent crank of a congressman, wasted no time in training his eldest daughter to be his intellectual companion. He had her, by the age of nine, reading Virgil and other Latin classics along with political histories and biographies. When Margaret responded better than expected, he simply raised his expectations. She was later convinced that this early intellectual forcing lay at the root of the migraines and nightmares that would plague her for her entire life.

As Fuller reached adolescence, her intellectual voracity, forwardness, and strong opinions alarmed her parents, who promptly changed course and packed her off to a finishing school for young women. Although she submitted, as she often would, to her sense of family duty, the seeds of her career and character were sown.

Margaret Fuller was unabashed about her emotional needs but often obtuse about the misunderstandings that inevitably arose at levels of intimacy unusual between the sexes at the time. "If you love me as I deserve to be loved, you cannot dispense with seeing me," she castigated her soul mate, the banker-aesthete Samuel Gray Ward. She reminded Ward that he called her by "the sacred name of Mother," yet this was evidently not a clear enough signal about the limits of his intentions. Her intensity often inspired a mixture of devotion and resentment in her close friends, both male and female. Aggressive self-confidence masked a vulnerable and extraordinarily generous woman genuinely concerned about the welfare of her friends and of the unfortunate. Yet the self-reliance Emerson had preached and she adopted was too much for her New England friends. They could hardly fathom her participation in the 1848 Italian revolution against Austria and France, about which she sent dispatches to Horace

✪ TESS LEWIS's essays have appeared in the *Hudson Review*, the *New Criterion*, and *Belles Lettres*.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Greeley's *New-York Tribune.* When Fuller's friends learned that she was returning from Europe after four years away with her two-year-old son and a Marchese, who may or may not have been her husband, they suggested that she would be better off remaining in Italy, since its culture was more congenial to a woman of her accomplishments.

Despite genuine sorrow, her friends breathed an inaudible but collective sigh of relief when Margaret Fuller drowned in a shipwreck several hundred yards off Fire Island. They promptly set about fitting her to their desired dimensions. Her family destroyed or mutilated many of her letters. Emerson and his co-editors James Freeman Clarke and William Henry Channing wrote reminiscences and willfully excerpted her journals and letters, often without ellipses and out of context, in order to solidify their vision of her and especially of her marriage. They entitled the heavily edited collection *Memoirs of Margaret Fuller Ossoli.* In it, Emerson painted a rather unforgiving portrait of the contradictions in her character—the qualities that attracted and those that repelled him—and tried to describe her "rather mountainous ME." Clarke and Channing, both ministers, suppressed all disturbing evidence of irreverence, spiritual doubt, social radicalism, and impropriety. Their sections of the book are pious eulogies rather than candid accounts of a woman whom both had known for almost twenty years, during many of which they had seen or corresponded with her daily. None of the three editors had been close to Fuller during her years in Italy and so gave disproportionate weight to her more purely intellectual early years.

Published two years after her death, the *Memoirs* sold out several editions within weeks. In the same year, Nathaniel Hawthorne published *The Blithedale Romance,* his fictional account of Brook Farm, the utopian socialist community in which he briefly resided and Fuller had visited. She considered Hawthorne and his wife Sophia good friends and had even singled him out as one of the hopes for American literature. He disingenuously denied that his heroine Zenobia, a "high-spirited Woman, bruising herself against the narrow limitations of her sex," and whose "mind was full of weeds," was based on Fuller. Yet there are many resemblances, including a death by drowning. The image of Margaret Fuller that remained in the public mind was of an intelligent, sensitive, eloquent, courageous, and devoted woman who was also imperious, presumptuous, sarcastic, and ridiculous. In short, a woman who often appeared larger than life had become a caricature of herself.

One of Fuller's close friends, the Unitarian minister Thomas Wentworth Higginson, went some way in redressing the distortions. He concentrated his 1884 biography on Fuller's successful efforts to build "a career of mingled thought and action, such as she finally found" instead of the ardent "desire for self-culture" that dominated the first three decades of her life and was so important to her transcendentalist friends. And yet, until Bell Gale Chevigny's 1976 biographical anthology, *The Woman and the Myth,* sorted much of the fact from the fiction, biographers were content to take the memoirs, hearsay, and various secondhand anecdotes at face value. Now that the sixth and final volume of Fuller's collected letters, edited by Robert N. Hudspeth (Cornell University Press, 1995), has appeared, it is possible to take some measure of the woman who evoked such passionate responses from her friends and enemies.

As with many great conversationalists, Fuller's genius tended to fade in her published prose. Swept away by her mission to educate and inspire her readers, she often allowed her extravagant idealism and moral earnestness alternately to inflate or dampen her style. Yet her genius still sparkles and gleams in her less formal writing. The letters capture her elusive mercurial character, her wit, her doubts, and moments of despair. They were a vital outlet for Fuller's almost compulsive need to connect "mind to mind." In her letters she consoles, advises, sympathizes, teases, lectures, exhorts, analyzes, and questions—always questions. Very private about her own emotional life, she had an uncanny ability to elicit confidences from others. Emerson's concern was only half in jest when he recalled in his journal that "when I heard that a trunk of her correspondence had been found & opened, I felt what a panic would strike all her friends, for it was as if a clever reporter had got underneath a confessional & agreed to report all that transpired there in Wall street."

This is the Margaret Fuller that animates the first half of Charles Capper's two-volume

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

definitive biography. Published in 1992, *Margaret Fuller: An American Romantic Life*, sets Fuller in full historical and intellectual context. Taking us up to 1840, when, at thirty years of age, Fuller began editing the transcendentalist journal *The Dial*, Capper does true justice to Fuller's early aspirations and achievements. He rightly notes that Fuller's passionate extroversion renders her "ultimately comprehensible only in relation to the people with whom she interacted."

Each of the many figures Capper brings to life in this social and cultural biography illuminates a different facet of Fuller's complex personality. All of Fuller's relations were complicated, but none more so than her intellectual and emotional engagements with movements and ideals. The breadth of movements she embraced or influenced is astonishing: "from American Unitarianism to German Romanticism, from women's education to Italian republicanism." Capper's discussion of them reveals the fundamental paradoxes in her life: "republicanism without politics, Romanticism without personal romance, Transcendentalism without religious transcendence, and (as she herself put it many times) 'masculine' intellectual styles with 'feminine' proclivities and circumstances."

Charles Capper vividly recreates antebellum America's intoxicating atmosphere of social change and possibility as well as its stultifying hand of convention. An appreciation of these forces is indispensable to understanding the external sources of Fuller's strength and the range of obstacles in her path. Hers was a struggle to expand if not transcend the limited sphere to which she was traditionally bound and to reconcile family duty with her need for engagement in a life of action. Capper's projected second volume, on the dramatic final decade of Fuller's life, will no doubt reveal even more clearly how much a woman both of and against her time Margaret Fuller was.

It is therefore rather disappointing to have Fuller's spirit once again bundled into a narrow conceptual straitjacket as Joan Von Mehren does in her recent book *Minerva and the Muse: A Life of Margaret Fuller* (University of Massachusetts Press, 1995). Von Mehren organized her biography around a distinction Fuller drew in her most famous work, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, between the intuitive feminine, or Muse, side and the rational, deductively logical, and masculine, or Minerva, side of herself. To be sure, New England in the early 1800s was obsessed with delineating gender roles, and this obsession pervades Fuller's life and work, despite her aspirations to the higher reaches of unsexed Mind and Spirit. Too heavy an emphasis on this division at the expense of other conflicting forces in Fuller's life—a life of thought versus a life of action, the private versus the public realm, family duty versus ambition, American versus European culture—does little justice to the omnivorous range of Fuller's interests and sensibilities. "Such a predetermination to *eat* this big universe as her oyster or her egg, and to be absolute empress of all height and glory in it that her heart could conceive, I have not before seen in any human soul," wrote Thomas Carlyle. So, although Von Mehren works hard to dispel the usual myths in her conscientious and thorough study, she ultimately explains the enigma of Margaret Fuller by diminishing her.

During her lifetime, Fuller paid dearly for the strain of being molded into various shapes expedient to others. The migraines, back pain, and recurring nightmares were particularly severe in times of strain and immediately following any intellectual achievement. There were plenty of both. Her legacy, both as a result of and in spite of the mythology that was fashioned around her, is one of a complex, demanding, and versatile mind born into a society that in the end was not ready for her.

The Boston-Cambridge world into which Margaret Fuller was born in 1810 was establishing its dominance as the intellectual capital of America, a position it would hold until the Civil War. The upper middle class firmly believed in educating its daughters. In fact, with the rising influence of Unitarianism and its emphasis on the use of reason in interpreting the Scriptures, education took on overtones of religious duty. Aside from shoring up religious sentiment and training for tutoring within the family, a girl's education was primarily ornamental. Fuller was superbly ornamented. When her exhausting home tutoring became insufficient, she attended Dr. Park's prestigious grammar school. Despite her father's own idiosyncrasy and his desire to train his daughter's mind as his had been, he soon realized that she would not be the conven-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The 1995 Phi Beta Kappa Books Awards

The Phi Beta Kappa Award in Science

JOURNEY TO THE ANTS: A STORY OF SCIENTIFIC EXPLORATION. *Bert Hölldobler* and *Edward O. Wilson. Harvard University Press. $24.95.*

Citation: *Journey to the Ants: A Story of Scientific Exploration*, by Bert Hölldobler and Edward O. Wilson, is a great book. It's physically beautiful, it's clearly written, the science is impeccable, and it communicates several important messages. One really understands how people find in a group of ostensibly ordinary and unattractive organisms enough intellectual fascination to last a lifetime. One sees the importance of some not-very-glamorous activities in science to the understanding of the world in which we live. One sees science in the best sense without the usual and complicating admixture of technology and practical imperatives. The reader will never look at an ant the same way again.

The Christian Gauss Award

DOSTOEVSKY: THE MIRACULOUS YEARS, 1865–1871. *Joseph Frank. Princeton University Press. $35.*

Citation: *Dostoevsky: The Miraculous Years, 1865–1871* is the fourth volume of Joseph Frank's monumental critical biography of the great Russian novelist. In this volume, as well as the preceding ones, Frank traces the social-cultural genesis of Dostoevsky's work. He shows in masterful fashion how the writing is rooted in the circumstances of Dostoevsky's own political experience, the intellectual and moral conflicts of the generation of the 1840s with its passion for Utopian socialism and its legacy in the nihilism of the generation of the 1860s. We are given not only a splendid portrait of the life, but also a compelling account of how the life and the times informed the works of art. Frank's knowledge of Russian political and cultural history of the period is impressive, but even more impressive is the way he makes every detail of what he knows count in the interpretation of the life and the work. This biography is a classic, perhaps the best critical literary biography of the century.

The Ralph Waldo Emerson Award

THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY IN WESTERN CHRISTIANITY, 200–1336. *Caroline Walker Bynum. Columbia University Press. $29.95.*

Citation: *The Resurrection of the Body* by Caroline Walker Bynum takes up the Christian doctrine of immortality and the persistent attempts of men and women to conceive and defend it in physical terms. It is a topic of perpetual interest. Just what is it that is saved? What exactly triumphs over death? The Christian answer always is our flesh and bones. Professor Bynum traces the developments in these ideas at various crucial times from the second through the fourteenth century. She examines the debates of theologians, martyrs, and poets, but she also looks at the visual arts for the iconography of resurrection. Finally, she is interested in connected popular attitudes revealed in burial practices and ideas about relics, miracles, devotion, and dismemberment. As a piece of contextualized intellectual history, the book can be fairly called masterful.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tional young woman he expected. At fourteen, her formal, classical education was all but abandoned for schooling in the domestic arts.

After two years at the Prescott Young Ladies Seminary in Groton, Fuller returned home at the age of sixteen to help with the care and education of her six younger siblings. Working long days that began before five and ended well past eleven, she read broadly in English, French, Italian, and Spanish literatures and explored philosophy and history. For several hours a day, she even continued her Greek and Latin recitation at the Cambridgeport Grammar School. Yet German literature—and in particular Goethe—would be the intellectual and inspirational touchstone of her life. Within a few months, she mastered the language on her own and embarked on an almost frenzied exploration of German literature. German romanticism, with its emphasis on the presence of the divine in man and nature, on man's intuitive ability to understand God, and on the individual's responsibility for his own moral development, struck a deep chord with Fuller and her transcendentalist friends. Yet Goethe surpassed his fellow romantics—among them Novalis, Richter, Tieck, and Schiller—in literary genius, in critical judgment, and, most important, for Fuller, in his insistence on a life of broad experience and action.

Works of European literature, and especially German, were extremely scarce. Harvard had only recently established a modern language department despite vociferous opposition within the administration, and Margaret had to borrow copies from friends. The breadth of her reading and brilliant conversation captivated much of Harvard and intellectual Boston, and several personal libraries were open to her. At the time, America knew little more of Goethe than that he led a scandalous life with an openly acknowledged mistress and that his fiction treated such subjects as marital infidelity. In championing him, Fuller risked being tarred with the same moral brush. Her enthusiasm, like her later public support for George Sand and Byron, was an act of no little intellectual courage. Fuller began translating Goethe's *Torquato Tasso* and preparing a biography of him. Although she was never able to complete the biography—no one would discuss the scandalous particulars of Goethe's life, especially with a woman—she eventually published an influential introductory essay, paving the way for his reception in America.

In 1833, after four terms in Congress, Timothy Fuller ran unsuccessfully for lieutenant governor of Massachusetts. Disenchanted with politics, he moved his family from Cambridge to a Groton farm in pursuit of a vision of himself as a Jeffersonian gentleman farmer. The six-hour stagecoach journey from Boston left Fuller painfully isolated from her friends, while many household chores and tutoring the youngest four children devoured her time. Despite her onerous burdens and a severe illness that may have caused a curvature of her spine, Fuller pursued her self-education and her research for a life of Goethe. Husbandry was not her father's strong suit, and there was little capital left when Timothy Fuller died suddenly in 1835. In the absence of a will, the estate was caught in a legal quagmire, and Fuller was forced to seek outside employment to help support the family. Teaching was the best of the few options open to educated women. By all accounts she was an inspiring and demanding teacher. But she resented the time it took from the studies she continued on the side, and she resigned after three years.

Fuller's public flowering as an intellectual began in 1839. Her mother finally sold the Groton farm, and Fuller moved with her to Jamaica Plain in Boston. She published a translation of J. P. Eckermann's *Conversations with Goethe* and began her weekly "Conversations" in Boston. Fuller was looking for a more rewarding way of earning a living than schoolteaching that would also fulfill her idealism. She intended these university-level seminars to be a means for educated, thinking women "to systematize thought and give a precision in which our sex are so deficient, chiefly, I think because they have so few inducements to test and classify what they receive." She also wished these women "to ascertain what pursuits are best suited to us in our time and state of society, and how we may make best use of our means for building up the life of thought upon the life of action." In encouraging the hundreds of women who attended her Conversations to think clearly about their situation and to articulate their feelings and aspirations, Fuller broadened the horizons of several generations of women.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In these years Fuller solidified her friendship with Emerson. She first met him in 1835, when she was twenty-five and he thirty-two. She forced him to rise above his puritanical objections to Goethe's personal life, and he encouraged her to temper her Continental romanticism with English writers from Chaucer, Chapman, and Herbert to Coleridge and Carlyle. She was profoundly inspired by the depth of Emerson's belief that reform begins within the individual soul. Yet, for all her idealism, she could not accept a life lived in isolation from society. She found herself "far larger and deeper for him," but recognized that, because of Emerson's self-imposed isolation from the rude particulars of life, they would always live on different planes. "He had faith in the Universal, but not in the Individual Man; he met men, not as a brother, but as a critic. Philosophy appeared to chill instead of exalting the poet." Fittingly, when it came to co-editing *The Dial*, through which the transcendentalists hoped "to lift men to a higher platform," he left all the particulars to her.

In the first issue, Fuller explained her critical approach to literature in her "Short Essay on Critics." Taking cues from the criticism of Goethe, Carlyle, and Coleridge, she judged a work by its own laws and against its time. Although she preferred timeless works that aspired to high moral, spiritual, and aesthetic ideals, her demanding yet flexible standards left her open to the truths revealed by contemporary literature and literature written by authors who led unconventional lives. At the time, only Edgar Allan Poe was writing equally discerning and authoritative criticism, although his strict requirements of genius narrowed his range and led to vituperative denunciations. The standard criticism of the day required books to be elevating and morally inspiring, so Fuller's insistence on examining all aspects of life in the magazine as in her other writing earned significant censure. "I accept the limits of human nature," she noted, describing her hopes for *The Dial*, "and believe a wise acknowledgement of them one of the best conditions of progress." She received no salary and few contributions. The toll taken by editing and writing much of the material in each issue forced her to hand the journal over to Emerson after two years.

Following her final series of Conversations in 1843, Fuller left for a tour of the frontier near Chicago and Milwaukee. She expanded her journal of the trip one year later and published it as *Summer on the Lakes*. It is a curious mix of travel writing, autobiographical fiction, descriptions of the immigrants' lives on hard-won farmland, and indignant accounts of the mistreatment of the Indians. On her return, she moved to New York where she joined the staff of Horace Greeley's *New-York Tribune* as literary editor, music critic, and journalist. Each week she was responsible for two columns on literature and one on social issues. Her social analysis quietly but firmly exposed the underside of American society. She wrote on the double standard by which prostitutes were simultaneously exploited and condemned, and discussed the appalling conditions of orphanages and insane asylums. Her literary journalism implemented and refined the critical apparatus she had set forth in her *Dial* essay.

"We have listened too long to the courtly muses of Europe," Emerson had announced in his 1837 literary declaration of independence, "The American Scholar." While Emerson sought an abstract cure for the "timid, imitative, tame" spirit of American letters in personal inspiration by the "Divine Soul," he anointed Fuller as the one to introduce the "New Age" in American literature. Even before her editorial work on *The Dial*, she had argued with friends about the literary health of the nation. As Channing describes it, she contrasted American literature's "boyish crudity, half boastful, half timid, with the tempered, manly equipoise of thorough-bred European writers." Her extensive reading in the literatures of both continents for the *Tribune* led to her essay "American Literature: Its position in the present time, and prospects for the future." She explained that America needed time to mature, absorb the multiplicity of cultures that arrived at its shores, and move beyond the struggle for material necessities before it could support a culture as accomplished as that of the Old World.

> [An American genius will not appear] till the fusion of races among us is more complete. It will not rise till this nation shall attain sufficient moral and intellectual dignity to prize moral and intellectual, no less highly than political, freedom, not till, the physical resources of the country being explored, all its regions studded with towns, broken by the plow, netted together

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

by railways and telegraph lines, talent shall be left at leisure to turn its energies upon the higher department of man's existence.

The American intellectual avant-garde of the mid-1800s was sharply divided between those who turned toward Europe and those who energetically rejected it. By raising her readers' expectations for a national literature that could incorporate their European literary heritage, Fuller helped form an audience for an indigenous literary genius. Unfortunately, she did not live to see the sudden flowering of the American Renaissance in the watershed years of 1850 to 1855 when *The Scarlet Letter*, *Leaves of Grass*, *Moby-Dick*, and *Walden* firmly established a truly American literature.

Fuller expanded an essay written for *The Dial* into *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (1845). It is a work that has not aged well. This unwieldy, bookish tract argues for women's independence, education, and equality with a sweeping tour of history, mythology, and literature. It was immensely popular and influential at the time, but its prophetic, exhortatory tone quickly exhausts all but her most determined contemporary readers.

In 1846, Margaret Fuller finally sailed to her beloved Europe. Only there did she find the freedom to realize the vision of equal possibilities for women and of a life of action for herself. She first toured England, where she met and wrote for the *Tribune* about Carlyle and Wordsworth as well as the conditions of the poor and reform movements. She met the Italian revolutionary Giuseppe Mazzini and later, in Paris, Adam Mickiewicz, the Polish nationalist and poet. The latter challenged her to live up to the standards of liberty she was advocating. "For you the first step of your deliverance . . . is to know whether you are to be permitted to remain a virgin," he counseled. He added later, "Do not forget that even in your private life *as a woman* you have rights to maintain," and, "Live and act, as you write." Mazzini offered her an opportunity to realize political ideals by drafting her in his battle to establish an Italian republic.

She sailed to Italy in 1847. Pope Pius IX was liberalizing his rule, and the Republicans were gaining footholds in many of the Austrian controlled states. While reporting on the developments from Rome, Fuller met Giovanni Ossoli, ten years her junior, the youngest son of a declining Roman aristocratic family. He had a meager education, no professional prospects, and Republican sympathies. He joined the rebellious Civic Guard, which further alienated him from his brothers, who served in the Papal Guard, and put his life in danger after the fall of the short-lived Republic.

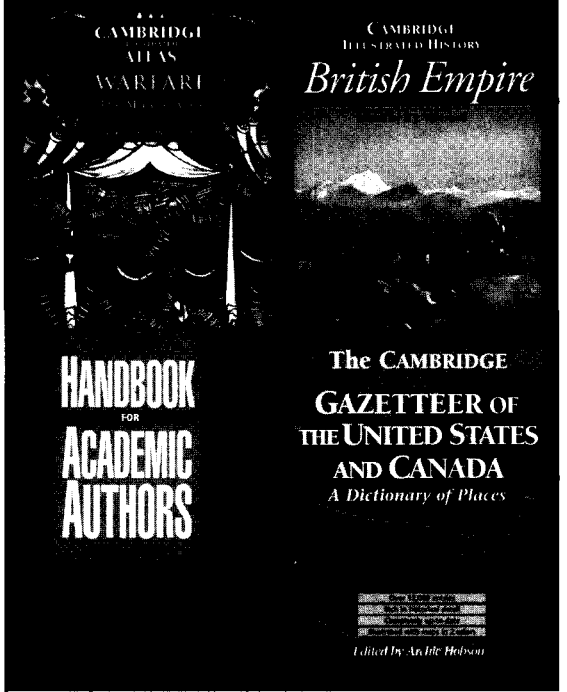
By the spring of 1848, Fuller was pregnant with Ossoli's child. Her pregnancy coincided with the rising fortunes of "Young Italy." The states of Sicily and Naples rose and Ferdinand II granted Sicily a constitution. Louis Philippe's demise in February was followed by Metternich's in March. Without Austrian support, the pope was eventually forced to flee. Early in 1849, the Republic was declared, and Mazzini returned triumphant to Rome. Within six months, however, the Austrians and the French would begin marching toward Rome.

"I have no child, and the woman in me has so craved this experience that it has seemed the want of it must paralyze me," Fuller had written when she first arrived in Rome. Just when she had finally attained the life of action for which she had been striving for decades, her child arrived. She was almost single-handedly informing the American public about the risorgimento and interceding with the American ambassador on behalf of her revolutionary friends. In the closing months of the revolution, she was running a hospital for the wounded on the island of Tiber. She retired to a country village for a few months to bear her son Angelo in secret in September of 1848 and returned to Rome without her child two months later in order to continue reporting on the battle, her sole source of income. Every few weeks, Fuller braved dangerous travel conditions to visit Angelo in the village of Rieti, where she had left him in the care of a wet nurse and once found him half-dead from malnutrition and neglect.

Almost three years before, after meeting George Sand in Paris, Fuller attempted to explain the French writer's personal life to her unreceptive New York readers. "She needs no defence, but only to be understood, for she has bravely acted out her nature, and always with good intentions. She might have loved one man permanently, if she could have found one contemporary with her who could interest and command her throughout her range; but there was hardly a possibility of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

OUTSTANDING SCHOLARSHIP



The Cambridge Illustrated Atlas of Warfare

The Middle Ages, 768-1487

Nicholas Hooper** and **Matthew Bennett

This informative book debunks many of the myths surrounding medieval warfare to present a picture of a sophisticated military culture. It spans the period from the coronation of Charlemagne to the last of the English Wars of the Roses and covers campaigns in and around Europe and the Mediterranean.

44049-1 Hardback $39.95

The Cambridge Illustrated Atlas of Warfare

Renaissance to Revolution, 1492-1792

Jeremy Black

This volume is a lively study of warfare during the early modern period, ranging from the European Renaissance to the American Revolution. Throughout, the author pays particular attention to the effects of European military expansion on the Americas, Africa, Asia, and the Mediterranean.

47033-1 Hardback $39.95

The Cambridge Illustrated History of the British Empire

***P.J. Marshall,** Editor*

This illuminating survey of the development and impact of the British Empire covers the end of the American Revolution to the present day. Twelve experts on imperial history survey the experience of colonialism in North America, the Caribbean, India, Africa, Australia, the Middle East, and Asia.

Contributors: Toyin Falola, David Fieldhouse, Kenneth Inglis, Benjamin Kline, Ravinder Kumar, John MacKenzie, P. J. Marshall, Ged Martin, Tom Metcalf, Andrew Porter, Tapin Raychaudhuri, A. J. Stockwell

Cambridge Illustrated Histories

43211-1 Hardback $39.95

The Cambridge Gazetteer of the United States and Canada

A Dictionary of Places

Archie Hobson

"Almost everything you've ever wanted to know about just about every place in the United States and Canada....a handy, one-volume browse through the continent." — Morley Safer

"...a valuable work that will be welcome in all reference departments."

— Booklist/Reference Books Bulletin

41579-9 Hardback $49.95

Handbook for Academic Authors

Third Edition

Beth Luey

"Anyone from a graduate student to the still hyperkinetic producer (of textbooks or monographs or in between) can learn from this straightforward, sober, thorough, orderly, and practical guide, reinforced by a classified, annotated, and evaluative bibliography."

— American Literature

49892-9 Paperback $14.95

Available in bookstores or from

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211.
Call toll-free 800-872-7423. Web site: http://www.cup.org
MasterCard/VISA accepted. Prices subject to change.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that, for such a person." Finding herself in a similar position, but with far more than her social reputation at stake, she wrote her sister, "I neither rejoice nor grieve, for bad or for good, I acted out my character." She was torn between her fundamental but irreconcilable need for the active pursuit of her social and political ideals and her emotional needs: the demands of "prudential motherhood" and, despite her opposition to all but the most perfect marriages, her commitment to one who initially "seemed so every way unfit" but who, unlike the others, loved her "from simple affinity" rather than "with a mixture of fancy and enthusiasm excited by [her] talent at embellishing subjects."

In June of 1849, the French entered Italy. Hoping to shore up their ties to the Vatican, they crushed the Republican forces. Ossoli and Fuller were forced to leave Rome for Florence. Defeated in spirit and on the brink of poverty, she there arranged her return to the United States after failing to get a firm commitment from English publishers for the book she was writing on the history of the revolution. They could not afford passage on the safer steamers and embarked on an American schooner. Before they even reached Leghorn, their point of departure for the transatlantic crossing, the captain died of smallpox. Angelo, always a sickly child, contracted the disease but miraculously recovered. The crossing was uneventful, but the boat was blown off course by a violent storm as it neared New York. They hit a sandbank within sight of shore. Several of the crew members survived, but Fuller, Ossoli, and Angelo all drowned.

If her dispatches—leaner, more direct, and impassioned than her earlier writing—were any indication, her greatest written work was lost when the manuscript of her history was washed overboard. Some of her detractors denied the manuscript's existence. But, even so, her dispatches, enlarged by reflection, her research into the liberal and socialist roots of the 1848 Paris uprising, and the copious notes she had saved would certainly have formed an important work of contemporary history.

In his journals Emerson noted, "Margaret, wherever she came, fused people into society, & a glowing company was the result. When I think how few persons can do that feat for the intellectual class, I feel our squalid poverty." Fuller galvanized and transformed all that she engaged herself with—individuals as well as movements. Yet her very versatility, and her tediously rhapsodic prose, leaves her extensive legacy largely unrecognized.

Margaret Fuller was the American Mind writ large. Her ideals of social progress were shaped by the tension between her boundless faith in the individual and her belief in communal responsibility. She used her profound knowledge of her European literary, cultural, and intellectual heritage to her own—and America's—ends. Dissatisfied with the complacency of nineteenth-century Jeffersonian democracy, she sought the idealism of her forefathers among modern European revolutionaries. She continually reinvented herself: from pure intellectual, to feminist and social activist, to political and social radical. Margaret Fuller's descent from the empyrean of transcendentalism and German romanticism into the physical world of social reform, revolution, and desire may have often brought her close to despair, but it left her friends and her country much the richer.

Brave Mrs. O.

MRS. OLIPHANT: 'A FICTION TO HERSELF.' A LITERARY LIFE. *By Elisabeth Jay. Oxford University Press. $39.95.*

Reviewed by SONYA RUDIKOFF

Any writer who produced nearly one hundred novels offers a daunting subject for criticism and biography. And if that writer also published biographies, travel books, literary histories, numerous reviews of other books, along with a valuable history of the venerable British publishing firm of Blackwood, the project will be time-consuming as well. Fortunately, in the recent biography of Mrs. Oliphant, a British scholar, Elisabeth Jay, has done justice to a prolific Victorian. This Scottish writer possessed great gifts, but her place in the company of her fellow Victorians is uncertain. She was a near contemporary of Charlotte Yonge, George Meredith, and George du Maurier, younger than Dickens and Mrs.

SONYA RUDIKOFF's recent work has been about Mrs. Humphry Ward, Mrs. Oliphant, George Gissing, and their milieux.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Gaskell, older than Hardy and Henry James, younger than Trollope, Charlotte Brontë, Disraeli, and George Eliot. Around her, vying for attention, were numbers of capable, entertaining, sensational writers—men and women producing those three-decker novels, articles, and stories that seemed to be in such demand by an increasingly large and avid English reading public.

Professor Jay gives a very good account of Margaret Oliphant's life and of her vast production, offers some sense of its literary reception, and places the writer in the populous field of Victorian writers, amid the subjects of that tumultuous period. The elimination of the stamp and paper taxes had made periodicals more available and profitable; the increase in schooling, the growth of the population, and the development of the publishing business all contributed to the situation in which Mrs. Oliphant found herself as a young writer. Soon her pressing financial needs led her to the rapid production of novels, stories, articles, and other literary work.

Born in 1828 and dead by 1897, Mrs. Oliphant was a celebrated writer of the mid-Victorian years. Her novels were serialized in the magazines of the educated middle class, especially *Blackwood's*, the *St. James Gazette*, the *Spectator*, and the *Cornhill*. Her shorter fiction was also published in the periodicals of the day, and numerous citations in the *Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals* attest to her immense productivity. Blackwood, Macmillan, Hurst and Blackett, and other publishers brought out her travel books, her historical and literary works. She married an artist in stained glass who worked with Pugin; he died of tuberculosis after they had been married for seven years. She had five children—two of whom died in infancy, as well as a daughter who died young—nieces, a nephew, and brothers, and other members of her entourage whom she supported, along with two hopeless sons, who, when grown up, exploited her. All except the nieces pre-deceased her. When she died, she viewed her life's work as "an infinitude of pains and labour, and all to disappear like the stubble and the hay."

Was she right? It was a question that troubled Elisabeth Jay in the writing of her book. Where should a reader start with Mrs. Oliphant's copious production? It began when she was twenty-one and continued even after her death at sixty-nine, with the posthumous publication of short stories, essays, her autobiography, and a sketch of Queen Victoria. For most readers, something of the great output of these prolific writers always remains still to be read. Some of us may have kept aside a Henry James novel for our later years; there will certainly be an Oliphant novel left to read, because her entire oeuvre is not easily recovered, even by the most indefatigable of critics.

One could choose a novel from each decade, with special concentration on the Chronicles of Carlingford, from *The Rector* and *The Doctor's Family* of 1862, *Salem Chapel* (1863), *The Perpetual Curate* (1864), *Miss Marjoribanks* (1866), *The Curate in Charge* (1876), to *Phoebe, Junior: A Last Chronicle of Carlingford* (1876). Other notable works from subsequent decades stand out: *The Ladies Lindores* (1883), *Kirsteen* (1890). Other titles provoke interest: *The Prodigals and Their Inheritance* (1885), *The Heir Presumptive and the Heir Apparent* (1892), *The Railwayman and His Children* (1891), *John Drayton: Being a History of the Early Life and Development of a Liverpool Engineer* (1851). Then, there are *Memoirs of the Count de Montalembert* (1872), books on Dante, Cervantes, Molière, Francis of Assisi, Jeanne d'Arc; on Venice, Florence, Rome, Jerusalem, Edinburgh; historical sketches, studies of the Scottish churchmen Edward Irving and John Tulloch. She was a prodigiously energetic person, busy day and night with her work, often with one book being serialized as another was published, or with two novels published in the same year.

Professor Jay has organized her biography to take up certain themes, and not in a linear fashion; nor does she read from the fiction back into the life. Jay considers Mrs. Oliphant as a *woman* writer and has in mind at all times the conditions of this specific woman's life as well as the lives of different kinds of Victorian women. Although considerable attention is given to Mrs. Oliphant's position in the Victorian literary marketplace, and the contradictory demands of her life as mother and breadwinner, this is not a feminist biography and does not attempt to align Mrs. Oliphant's life and works with contemporary feminist theory. Mrs. Oliphant was not a feminist; perhaps she might even be thought anti-feminist in certain respects.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Professor Jay astutely analyzes the novels' depiction of the social and metaphysical dilemmas of daily life. Parents and children were among Mrs. Oliphant's themes, especially relations between fathers and sons, the false heroism seen in both sexes, the costs of a sacrificial life, the implications of marriages contracted early and late. Wills, property, and inheritance problems are used for the display of character. Clerical settings are often chosen to work out will and destiny, a choice that reflects the significance of religious belief and congregational affiliation in Victorian Britain. A familiarity with the domestic consequences of new rituals in the Anglican Church shapes *The Perpetual Curate* (1864), just as an awareness of the aesthetic movement prompts the portrayal of the bachelor don in *The Curate in Charge* (1876), who collects china. Mrs. Oliphant's financial situation required that she sign contracts for future work that would pay her right away, and she counted on her good health and indomitable strength to see her through these obligations. Remarkably, she did not repeat herself in the numerous novels but was continuously inventive.

Mrs. Oliphant could never understand how Trollope thought of his fictional characters as if they were real people. She couldn't afford the luxury of fantasying about her characters and themes. She seems not to have had those wonderful notebooks, like James, that would have encouraged her to ruminate on certain themes or fragments, allowing them to gestate and ripen. Her need to write quickly deprived her of this essential writer's preparation for work. "Perhaps my life has been too full of personal interests to leave me at leisure to talk of the creatures of my imagination, as some people do," she observed in 1894. Writing was for her a natural and pleasurable occupation, but the need to support her family determined everything. She began her widowhood one thousand pounds in debt and later commented "I [am not] insensible to the fact, perhaps hardest of all, that I must resign myself to do second-class work all my life from lack of time to do myself full justice." There was no one with whom to discuss her work or who could offer her comments before she sent work off, or who could advise, protect, or take care of her. What could she have done with a G. H. Lewes! What if she had only herself and her own work to consider? No hungry mouths of children, nieces, nephew, sick husband, brothers, and other dependents, no school fees to earn, no housing or domestic expenditures for all of them?

Mrs. Oliphant was deeply interested in the unseen, the mysterious, the uncanny, the unaccountable. Many of her most successful, most widely read, and most enduring stories were of this kind. She was crisp, even insensitive, with reports of depression and emotional afflictions, both in herself and in others, and was not at all drawn to explore them, even when her observations of character revealed them most acutely. Her brisk habits of work did not permit much involvement in her characters. She could not sympathize with John Addington Symonds's interior life, his "elaborate self-discussions"; she remembered him in Davos as a "pleasant, frank, hearty man, as one saw him from outside." But could she really have meant *hearty*? She preferred to see him that way, as if recognizing that the outside was not all there was to see. But "any attempt at discussing myself like Mr Symonds, if I were likely to make it, only would end in outlines of trouble, in the deep, deep sorrow that covers me like a mantle." But, as Professor Jay demonstrates from Mrs. Oliphant's own writings, confessions were not welcomed; introspection, self-analysis, "self-compassion," or "exposition of self" were not to be summoned; melancholy was not to be indulged in.

If Mrs. Oliphant's refusal of emotion seems harsh, one has only to remember her journey to Italy in search of warmth for her tubercular husband. He was cold and ill, she was unaccustomed to manage, had never been abroad, and the two little children were five and two. At Lyons they arrived without their luggage. In Marseilles, they missed the boat for Leghorn. So they traveled to Nice by diligence (the public stagecoach), which took more than twenty-four hours, then on to Genoa by *vettura* (a four-wheeled carriage) and to Florence, which was chilly and foggy. In Florence, Mrs. Oliphant found that she was again pregnant. Later, when her ill husband wanted to move to Rome, it meant a steamboat from Leghorn to Civita Vecchia. Her income was twenty pounds a month, which Blackwood had promised to send in advance of the articles she was to write.

One has a vivid picture of the little troupe, on the quay at Marseilles, or at Leghorn, or

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE FUTURE OF OUR PAST

From Ancient Greece to the Global Village

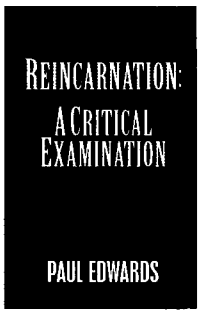
H.J. Blackham • Edited by Barbara Smoker

From the Renaissance through the Enlightenment and on into the modern industrial period, the West has taken shape in often tumultuous ways. As science, politics, and economics grew and developed, the secular world would interweave and clash with, and soon break away from, established universal views. What does the secular world offer us as a new vision of humanity? Blackham offers valuable observations to guide us.

408 pages • ISBN 1-57392-042-8 • Cloth $39.95

REINCARNATION: A CRITICAL EXAMINATION

Paul Edwards



Written in a lucid and witty style by an author renowned for his Voltairean sense of fun, this systematic and comprehensive critical evaluation of reincarnation shows how it is incompatible with many well-established facts such as population increases, the recency of life in the universe, and the transformation of species. In a particularly amusing chapter, Edwards shows that reincarnation is committed to belief in the astral body.

307 pages • ISBN 1-57392-005-3 • Cloth $28.95

MATERIALISM

An Affirmative History and Definition

Richard C. Vitzthum

This well-researched study traces the materialist hypothesis that all existence is an unbroken, material continuum from its origins in ancient Greece to modern times.

246 pages (Bibliography, Index)
ISBN 1-57392-027-4 • Cloth $29.95

RESTORING PRIDE

The Lost Virtue of Our Age

Richard Taylor

Taylor contends that we have lost sight of what it means to be proud, and urges a return to the classical virtues, when pride meant "justified love of oneself" in the pursuit of "personal excellence."

232 pages • ISBN 1-57392-024-X • Cloth $23.95

HOMOSEXUALITY

Debating the Issues

Robert M. Baird and M. Katherine Baird

This could be the most controversial book yet in the Contemporary Issues series. Its balanced approach offers powerful essays on four key issues: the causes of homosexuality, disputes about the role the courts should play, gays and the military, and religious attitudes toward homosexuality.

282 pages (Bibliography)
ISBN 1-57392-003-7 • Paper $16.95

FEMINISM UNDER FIRE

Ellen R. Klein

For reasons largely political, mainstream philosophy is reluctant to attack feminism. Ruthlessly analytical yet eminently accessible, Klein undresses academic feminism, exposing its pretensions, dogmas, fallacies, and peccadilloes.

258 pages • ISBN 1-57392-011-8 • Cloth $32.95

WHY I AM NOT A MUSLIM

Ibn Warraq • Foreword by R. Joseph Hoffmann (Oxford University)

The first book ever to critically examine every major tenet of Islam. Its controversial topics include: women's rights, the treatment of heretics, Islamic taboos, and religious tolerance.

402 pages (Glossary, Bibliography, Index)• ISBN 0-87975-984-4 • Cloth $25.95

At better bookstores, or order directly from

Prometheus Books

Call toll free (800) 421-0351 (24 hours) • Fax (716) 691-013759 • John Glenn Drive • Amherst, NY 14228-2197

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

shut up in the diligence for so long, the children restless and crying. "These little miseries are very bad at the time, but I was never one to make much of them," she insists. And what if she *had* made much of them? Would she abandon the husband, the children? Would she abandon her work? It was in creating what Professor Jay calls "a fiction to herself" that Mrs. Oliphant believed she could survive all the trials of her life, sacrificing no one, defending everything.

All or Nothing!

ZOLA: A LIFE. *By Frederick Brown. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. $37.50.*

Reviewed by MICHAEL BURNS

The westbound train from Paris stops just once a year at the village of Médan, thirty-four kilometers from the Gare St. Lazare, close by the Seine. Every October, on a Sunday afternoon, scores of literary "pilgrims" listen for the *arrêt spécial*, and then file up a gentle slope from the train tracks to the terraced gardens of Emile Zola's country home. Other enthusiasts come by automobile, bicycle, or on foot from nearby bourgs. Established by a group of young writers shortly after their mentor's death ninety-three years ago, the *Pèlerinage littéraire de Médan* commemorates, through an annual lecture published in the Zola Society's journal, *Les Cahiers Naturalistes*, one of two topics most often associated with the author's life and work: the naturalist movement in literature and the engagement of intellectuals in the Dreyfus Affair of the late 1890s.

Médan's pilgrims have always been a rich mix of amateurs and experts. Dressed in their *habits des dimanches*, working-class men and women sit beside provincial shopkeepers, schoolteachers, mayors, Paris professors, French and foreign students, and the occasional prime minister or president.

Zola's "enlarged public" endures: the public that, beginning with the enormous success of *L'Assommoir* in 1877, generated a fortune in royalties and a flood of notoriety; the public that the author entertained, shocked, enlightened, and celebrated. "Why should we tremble before a clientele composed of the entire nation?" he wrote. "Therein lies true literary democracy. . . . If our public becomes immense, it is for us to have voices powerful enough to reach it."

And prolific enough. *Nulla Dies Sine Linea* (no day without a line) goes the golden rule emblazoned on the stone hearth in Zola's Médan study. More often, the writer produced hundreds of lines before lunch. In a matter of months in 1866, he submitted 110 articles to *L'Evénement*; in the 1870s he contributed nearly two thousand essays to *Le Sémaphore de Marseille*; and the feverish pace continued through the twenty volumes of *Les Rougon-Macquart* and the trilogies, tetralogies, and theater pieces that followed. Edmond de Goncourt, a fierce rival who often aimed his "scurrilous tittle-tattle" at the more renowned naturalist, marveled at how Zola seemed never to stop working, despite his "hypochondriacal turn of mind." Imagined or real (he suffered both), no illness slowed his pen. By his mature years, Emile Zola was a huge presence in reputation and girth (he had a forty-six-inch waist), who wrote massive novels for a broad audience at breakneck speed.

Frederick Brown's important new biography was not written fast, but it was written big. Weighing in at nearly nine hundred pages, it honors its subject's lifelong motto, "All or Nothing!" And for Brown, Zola's copious productivity, his "impulse to say everything at once," is best understood as a race against the clock by an "orphan whose father [François] had been struck down in midcourse. . . . Time was always short. Time killed." François Zola's life as a civil engineer and his sudden death when Emile was seven left many marks and taught many lessons that this biography analyzes at every relevant turn. Legal battles following the economic collapse of a canal project designed by the elder Zola in Aix-en-Provence stripped his widow and son of their middle-class comforts and pushed them into a state of poverty that lasted nearly two decades. Angered and humiliated by the unscrupulous actions of his father's associates, and "caged" by the stifling provincialism of Provence, young Emile, like Rastignac with a mother in

✪ MICHAEL BURNS, author of *Dreyfus: A Family Affair, from the French Revolution to the Holocaust*, delivered the annual Zola Society lecture at Médan in 1994.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tow, aimed to conquer Paris and avenge his father's dishonor.

But a string of defeats came first. Mocked in Aix for his Parisian background (he had moved south with his parents at the age of three), he was taunted in the capital for his southern accent and foreign ancestry; his father had been born Francesco Zolla in Venice, and Emile would not claim French citizenship until the age of twenty-one (facts that militant nationalists would later exploit). Failing the *baccalauréat* exam twice, he then flirted with Romantic poetry. "I come as a student to his master," the brash twenty-year-old wrote Victor Hugo, "as a dreamy and passionate young man." But the experiment and the bold self-promotion failed; the poems, as Brown demonstrates, were clichéd, wooden, and worse.

By the early 1860s, Zola had decided "to do our century's heavy work with the rough-hewn tool of prose." After all, that was the powerful genre, the "virile" one, and, as Brown tells us, "making strides, writing prose [and] asserting masculinity became synonymous in Zola's rhetoric." Like his father, he would build elaborate projects based on modern scientific principles, and he would have them stand as filial monuments: "In my own work," he promised, "will my father have his name brilliantly enshrined." But anxiety lay below the bravado; obsessed with heredity and fearful that his father had passed on a legacy of failure, Zola entered his study every morning "to engage in what he described as 'a continual exercise of will over doubt.'"

His most enduring fictional monument, *Les Rougon-Macquart: Histoire naturelle et sociale d'une famille sous le Second Empire*, spanned twenty-two years and twenty volumes, from *La Fortune des Rougon* (1871) to *Docteur Pascal* (1893). Zola envisaged, in his biographer's words, "a drama unfolding through successive generations [of a family], in which every conflict would have innateness warring against heredity, or the self challenging the demon within for possession of characters who . . . struggle to escape a native milieu, a tainted past, a script visited on them at birth." Marching through detailed plot summaries and long excerpts from the major volumes, Brown introduces the principal players and analyzes the key leitmotivs: the grasping ambition and dogged determination of the Rougon branch; the violence, criminality, and alcoholism of the Macquarts. And he examines how Zola, experimental scientist and literary pathologist, portrayed "physiology operating like an idée fixe impervious to events." At times, Brown pushes the connections between Plassans (the fictional home of the Macquarts) and Aix-en-Provence too far; and at times he finds Zola's family, friends, and libidinous impulses lurking in too many characters. Most often, however, his assessments are subtle, sophisticated, and mercifully free of the obscurantist jargon that marks much of the literary criticism of our own fin de siècle.

We follow Zola—part researcher, part voyeur—on field trips to gather hard facts for *Les Rougon-Macquart* and the novels that followed: to the squalid streets and cafés of northern Paris depicted in *L'Assommoir*; to the coal pits of *Germinal*, the markets and slaughter houses of *Le Ventre de Paris*, and the sparkling new department stores of *Au Bonheur des Dames*, where, amidst an orgiastic frenzy of consumerism, women spend "the anxious and trembling hours they had formerly spent in chapel." Zola's notebooks bulged with data (the journal for a late work, *Lourdes*, reached 242 pages), and his background reading was voracious. He licked up detail, goes one of Brown's best turns of phrase, "like an aardvark feasting in a termitariam."

One field trip, which would later inform the novel *La Débâcle*, brought Zola back to Paris in the immediate aftermath of the Commune's "Bloody Week," in late May 1871. There, amidst the devastation that "still smelled of rotting flesh," he was haunted yet again by a theme that runs throughout his work; stained by the blood of Communards and government troops, every street, Brown explains, "spoke to the reality of a *bête humaine* trampling civilization underfoot."

More concerned with observation than theory, and more comfortable with science than theology, Zola struggled to capture the elemental conflict of good and evil without turning to the language of the church he had rejected long before. His primitive, anarchic, "aboriginal" beast, which crouched within the physiology of every man and woman, was the anti-clerical's variation on original sin; his *bête humaine* (which also served as the title of a powerful *Rougon-Macquart* novel) was Lucifer in mufti. Zola saw no resolution to this battle, no final or transcendant salvation. His faith in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

science and human progress remained strong, but so, too, did his conviction that heredity taints us all and that the wild beast lay in wait. "Indissolubly bound" within him, notes his biographer, were "modernity and primitivism, the forward-looking and the radically archaic."

Zola's politics were paradoxical as well. While he shared with his fair-weather friend Edmond de Goncourt an obsessive fear of the crowd, and while he wrote horrific scenes of working-class mobs, he did not, like Goncourt, condemn democracy as a "fatal instrument of society's imminent ruin"; he did not scorn "the ignorance of the vile multitude." Instead he championed the republic, celebrated the popular sovereignty promised by the Great Revolution, and committed himself to the crusade for civil equality and social justice.

For most of his career Zola manifested that commitment in literature designed to expose "the grinding toil and poverty" in which the urban and rural masses lived. "Naturalism," he insisted, "does not make pronouncements. It undertakes examinations." Numbering himself among the "toilers who set store by genius and patient study," he viewed politics "with contempt." Later, however, when he had the most to lose, he threw off the pretense of impartial observation and entered the arena in defense of Captain Alfred Dreyfus, a French officer of Alsatian Jewish background who had been court-martialed for allegedly transmitting secrets to Germany and deported to Devil's Island. Like the vast majority of his compatriots, Zola at first assumed Dreyfus's guilt; unlike the majority, he rallied to the prisoner's defense when new evidence confirmed a plot engineered by the French General Staff.

Brown devotes his final one hundred pages to this public and private drama. He has drawn on a rich array of published memoirs and secondary sources, but has not, it seems, probed the archives at first hand. And that is a pity; the French police collected reams of documents on Dreyfus's most notorious ally. Still, the familiar story is well told, and Zola's heroism comes clear, despite his enemies' accusations that ego and book sales meant more to him than justice.

His engagement began with a series of articles in 1897, but the pivotal moment occurred on January 13, 1898, with the publication of "J'accuse," the manifesto that indicted Dreyfus's superior officers and turned the judicial case into an international "affair." After a lifetime of producing an immense arsenal of fiction, Zola's global reputation as a champion of justice would be secured by a short salvo in a Paris newspaper.

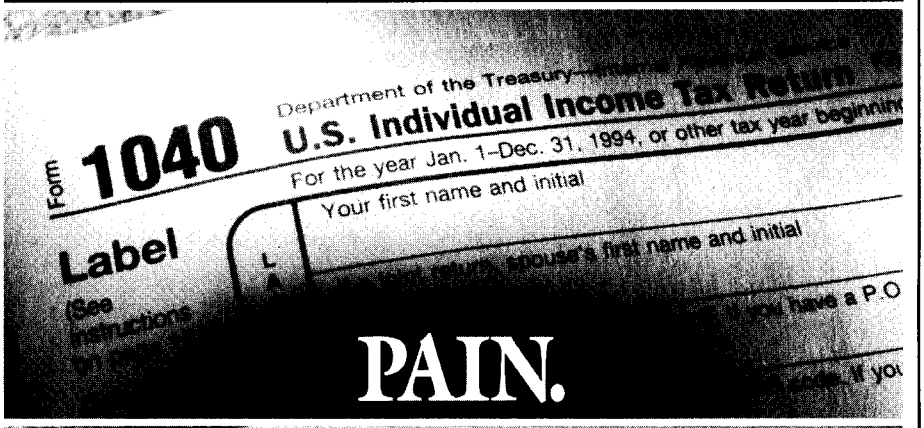
At first, only a handful of Dreyfusards defined it as a heroic act, while the nationalist and anti-Semitic press showered vitriol on the "Venetian" traitor, the scatological "pornographer," whose novels confirmed his fixation on filth, promiscuity, violence, and destruction. Zola came with a useful history. Caricaturists portrayed the broad-beamed writer as a flatulent pig wallowing in the stench of treason, or as a lecherous Italian out to rape the French republic. And they fouled his father's memory by conjuring up stories of corruption, thievery, and military dishonor. Zola fought back: "Since I have a pen, since forty years of work have given me the power to address the world and be heard by it, since the future is mine, rest easy in your tomb, Father. . . . Your son stands vigil."

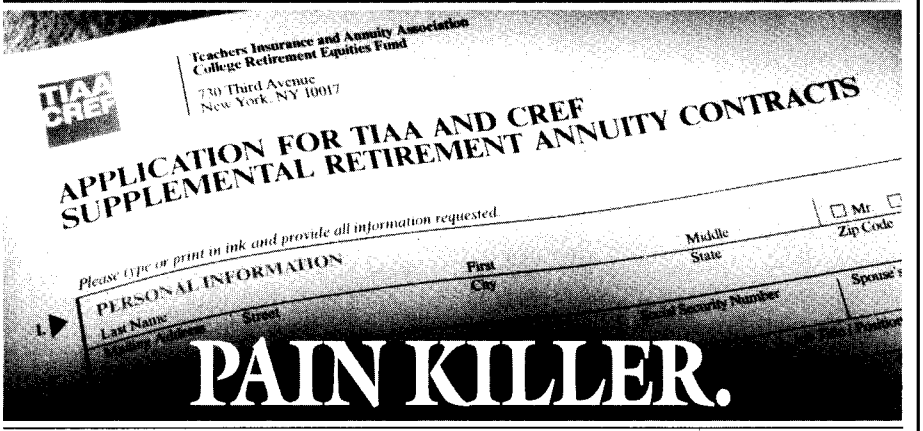
He also stood trial (for slander) in an explosive atmosphere reminiscent of the mob scenes from *Les Rougon-Macquart.* "Death to Zola! Death to the Jews! Long live the Army!" shouted crowds in Paris and provincial cities through the spring of 1898. Convicted and sentenced to a prison term, Zola lost his appeal and fled to England, where he remained for nearly a year, until new revelations in the Dreyfus case led to a second court martial and to the return to France of Captain Dreyfus and his most renowned ally.

The novelist and the army officer had more than exile in common. Zola's wife, Alexandrine, like the prisoner's wife, Lucie, received death threats and endured with selfless courage. And Zola, again like Dreyfus, had a young son and daughter from whom he was separated, though his children, unlike those of the very proper Captain, were the illegitimate offspring of a liaison with Jeanne Rozerot, a young chambermaid hired by Alexandrine in 1888. Curiously, this splendid biography, which treats its subject's domestic life in such detail, never draws these connections and never cites a revealing letter that Zola sent to Dreyfus in 1899, after the Captain's presidential pardon. Imagining him in the "intimacy of his family," where all "the abominations of the street die on the threshold of the home," Zola

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PRINCIPLES of SOUND RETIREMENT INVESTING





For fast relief from the nagging ache of taxes, we recommend TIAA-CREF SRAs. SRAs are tax-deferred annuities designed to help build additional assets—money that can help make the difference between living and living *well* after your working years are over.

Contributions to your SRAs are deducted from your salary on a pretax basis. That lowers your current taxable income, so you start saving on federal and, in most cases, state and local income taxes right away. What's more, any earnings on your SRAs are also tax deferred until you receive them as income. That can make a big difference in how painful your tax bill is every year.

As the nation's largest retirement system, based on assets under management, we offer a wide range of allocation choices—from TIAA's traditional annuity, which guarantees principal and interest (backed by the company's claims-paying ability), to the seven diversified investment accounts of CREF's variable annuity. What's more, our expenses are very low,* which means more of your money goes toward improving your future financial health.

To find out more, call **1 800 842-2888**. We'll send you a complete SRA information kit, plus a free slide calculator that shows you how much SRAs can lower *your* taxes.

Call today—it couldn't hurt.

TIAA CREF

Ensuring the future for those who shape it.℠

**Standard & Poor's Insurance Rating Analysis*, 1995; Lipper Analytical Services, Inc., *Lipper-Directors' Analytical Data*, 1995 (Quarterly). CREF certificates are distributed by TIAA-CREF Individual and Institutional Services, Inc. For more complete information, including charges and expenses, call 1 800 842-2733, extension 5509, for a CREF prospectus. Read the prospectus carefully before you invest or send money.

© 1996 Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association/College Retirement Equities Fund, 730 Third Avenue, New York, NY

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

must have thought of his own children when he described Dreyfus's son and daughter sitting on their father's knee while he told them "the entire tragic history" of the years just passed. "And they will be very proud of him," the letter went on, "they will carry . . . the name of a worthy man . . . who has purified himself [through suffering] to the point of the sublime."

But Zola had also been the agent of domestic suffering, as Brown makes clear. Alexandrine, saddened and embittered by her husband's divided loyalties ("life is ceaseless pain"), eventually accepted Jeanne and the children, though the two *ménages* were never fully united. Circulating between Médan and the country house that he kept for his second family nearby, Zola continued his legendary pace of productivity: having finished the huge trilogy, *Les Trois Villes*, in 1898, he continued work on a tetralogy, *Les Quatre Evangiles*. Neither the Affair, nor exile, nor domestic dramas would keep that naturalist from the swift completion of his many tomes.

Zola was about to embark on the third volume of the tetralogy when death came quickly and, in keeping with his life, amidst controversy. In the early morning of September 29, 1902, Zola and his wife succumbed to carbon monoxide poisoning in the bedroom of their Paris apartment. Alexandrine survived, but her husband, who had tried to open a window or call for help, collapsed and died. He was sixty-two years old. The investigation concentrated on a faulty chimney flue, but rumors spread quickly: Zola's enemies called it suicide, while allies accused militant nationalists of murder. Brown summarizes the controversy and notes the unanswered questions, but he does so without direct reference to police reports, which, amidst the Forensic details, include a particularly sad account of the writer's beloved dog: having died together, pet and master were autopsied together.

Tackling the near totality of Zola's literature and life, Frederick Brown has produced a majesterial biography. Which is not to say that the going is always smooth. Some of the book's most important chapters—for example, on the often stormy but always edifying friendships with Manet, Huysmans, Flaubert, Goncourt, Daudet, Turgenev, and Cézanne (who comes "swooping" in and out of these pages as he did in and out of Zola's life)—are riddled with random digressions and irrelevant facts. Turgenev's mistress, like many of Flaubert's anxieties, could be done without; and the scores of lengthy excerpts from letters, journals, and novels could be trimmed by half.

But if Brown has overdone the details, he has, in the end, done well by the man. We arrive at Zola's funeral with a full and rich understanding of a life blessed by genius and plagued by doubt; we grasp the monumental influence of his "experimental" novels; and we honor his singular contribution, as one eulogist emphasized, to the struggle for social justice. At the Montmartre Cemetery, Anatole France addressed the vast crowd (how could it be otherwise?) and defined his fellow Dreyfusard as "a moment in the history of human conscience."

Naked Words

1920 DIARY. *By Isaac Babel. Edited with an introduction by Carol J. Avins. Translated by H. T. Willetts. Yale University Press. $20.*

Reviewed by CLARENCE BROWN

The fragment was Babel's fated genre, and this *1920 Diary* is the fragment of a fragment, to be measured not in months but in weeks. The daily entries—around sixty-five depending on how you count, some a few lines long and some several pages in length—extend from early July to mid-September, though even within this period there is a sizable gap. But this happens to coincide with major engagements in the war that Budyonny's First Cavalry, to which Babel was assigned, was waging against the Poles on the eastern front of the Civil War, and these raw notes are the source of Babel's masterpiece, *Red Cavalry*. They are the closest we are ever likely to get, closer even than the letters, to the "real" Babel, though one must immediately add that his masks were so integral to his personality as

CLARENCE BROWN is Professor of Comparative Literature at Princeton University and editor of *The Portable Twentieth-Century Russian Reader*. His new translation of Zamyatin's *We* was published by Viking Penguin.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to be indistinguishable from the core of his being.

That the Jew Babel should be disguised as the good Russian K. Lyutov and attached as resident Bolshevik propagandist to a troop of Cossacks, the arch fiends of his racial nightmares, who slaughter the Jewish populations in their path as he more or less looks on, is so overwhelming an irony that it threatens to push our perception of the whole enterprise into the absurdist mode. In her memoir *Hope Against Hope*, Nadezhda Mandelstam reports a conversation in which her husband Osip asked his friend Babel what on earth impelled him to hang out with the secret police. Did death appeal to him? Babel replied, "I don't want to touch it with my fingers—I just like to have a sniff and see what it smells like." Most commentary on Babel and his work, and nearly everything I have seen about this diary, is so obsessed with this ultimately irresolvable paradox that I feel free to mention it and then to move on to another paradox that we tend to ignore.

It is this: The real Babel in life and the only slightly different Babel who appears as the narrator of his fictions are purely conjectural figures concealed beneath layers of ideological or literary costume, but the language that came from the pen of this shadowy personage, the actual Russian itself, was utterly naked. It is as though the price of an inspired plainness of talk was cloudy identity.

The style of Isaac Babel comes as a shock to readers whose expectations of Russian prose have been shaped by Tolstoy or Turgenev or Goncharov. It comes as an even greater shock to those whose tastes were formed on run-of-the-mill narrative. Those who prefer language to be adjectivally clad seem no less embarrassed by naked words than they would be by naked people. Encountering Babel's prose in a state of nature seems especially upsetting to translators.

One of Babel's Benja Krik stories, "How It Was Done in Odessa," appears in the same 1990 collection as the *1920 Diary*. It begins with a typically terse paragraph containing the words for *shadows, steel,* and *fury*. The words belong to the most quotidian of Russian vocabularies—*teni, stal',* and *beshenstvo*—and in Babel's final version there is not an adjective anywhere near them.

Most English translations are based on the 1923 magazine publication or texts derived from it. Yet for Walter Morison the shadows are *black*, the steel *russet*, and the fury *simple-minded*. Avrahm Yarmolinsky makes the steel improbably *rusty*. The French translators decide the shadows must be *énormes*, the steel *bien trempé*, and the fury *aveugle*. Renato Poggioli's Italian makes them *nere, incandescente*, and *scatenata*. What was wrong with Babel? Did he really imagine that fury could appear on the street without being simpleminded, blind, or unchained?

This instinct for restoring the cliché that Babel finally excised is nearly universal in those who translate him into any other language. And since the translators all come up with the different clichés favored by their own languages, they seem to be working from only approximately the same original. (Exception must be made, of course, for the furtive translator of earlier translators.) It recalls Borges's Pierre Menard, one of whose literary accomplishments, before he rewrote the *Quixote* word for word, was to recast Valéry's "Cimetière marin" *back* into alexandrines, the standard French meter from which the poet had striven to free his verse.

Since the tendency to banalize Babel's style is present in almost all the translations, and since translators are, after all, nothing more than readers who leave a public record of their reading, it is a good bet that the common reader also instinctively and unconsciously feels the need of habilitating Babel, domesticating him into the blague of automatic prose. His angularities seem in need of upholstering, lest anyone get a bad gash. A familiar epithet can take the edge off. Steel that is *incandescent* and fury that is *unchained* are not likely to do you much damage, since you have met them thousands of times sheathed in those same modifiers, and everything was all right, not to worry, just a writer going through the usual motions.

It is a relief to report that the seasoned translator H. T. Willetts has done a fine job of conveying the gritty, disjunctive, earthy, and elliptical Russian of this diary. If Babel writes *wind* and *rain*, so does Willetts, with no *driving* or *soaking* added.

Like all diaries, this one is uneven in quality and interest. Long stretches are rapid shorthand sketches, miscellanies of oddments, scraps of portraiture, injunctions to himself

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(the verb *describe* is nearly always imperative), capsules of story awaiting later development. But it is like all diaries, too, in that the writer cannot entirely deny himself the sense of a reader over his shoulder. There are whole segments in which the scraps and scrapings assemble themselves into the shapeliness of a finished thing—something to be shown rather than merely consulted.

It has long seemed to me that the key to Babel lies in a parable-like story, "My First Fee." (Or "My First Honorarium." The Russian is *Moj pervyj gonorar*, and it means "my first payment for writing." This precision is essential, since the story turns out to be about the genesis of Babel's art, if not all art, and the writer's complex relationship to it.) The autobiographical hero is a young man of twenty, broke and lonely, living in Tiflis and starving for love. On the other side of a thin partition, the couple from whom he rents a room engages in such boisterous coition that the house shakes. Desperate for sexual release, he timidly approaches a prostitute. She inspects his wallet, takes half of it, tells him that they will spend part of what he has left on a meal and only then go to her place. In the restaurant she mostly ignores him to engage in loud business conversations with some local merchants, who obviously respect her good sense and authority. Back in her building she leaves him to get ready while she noisily bids farewell to an old neighbor who is leaving. As if her managerial brio were not enough, the desperately grim surroundings dampen still further his anxious libido, which is finally reduced to nothing when she returns to expose to him a distinctly unappetizing body and to make preparations that strike him as those of a surgeon about to operate.

To cover his impotence he fumbles to recall fictions that he has been writing and selects one, still embryonic. He has been a "boy" to the Armenians, he tells her, forced into sexual slavery, abused by a series of protectors, and so on. Inspiration grows with the telling. He furnishes his narrative with a rich embroidery of human interest. An ideal "reader," she surrenders to his art and melts over the travails of "a whore like us." She calls him "my little sister," and they enter at once into an affectionate intimacy that could never have been predicted from the cold commercial arrangements of a few minutes before. She speaks to him in the secret language of women, never heard by men. The result is a bout of sexual congress fully as uproarious and satisfying as that of his landlord.

"My First Fee" is parabolic in that it reveals Babel's strategies for writing and for getting through life. The Cossacks of the Red Cavalry were no more and no less intimidating and masterful and cruel than the streetwalker of Tiflis, whose emblematic name was Vera (Truth). Babel was nevertheless drawn to these brigands by instinctual drives which he could scarcely name but which were, for all that, no less imperious. They were as terrifying as she was, and as desirable. How could he, with spectacles on his nose and September in his heart (this famous self-description comes from "My First Fee"), dare to insinuate his unsuitable person into this company?

The answer: he could write himself in. Babel knew what every writer with good luck eventually learns, which is that before inventing a landscape or characters or an intrigue, you must invent the inventor. The debasement, the sexual humiliation, the writer as whore that one finds in the story is typical of Babel's tone, but it is what allows for the stripping away of all the lies of mere social niceness to get at the real story, the one with unmodified steel, the secrets that only one woman tells another, or one Cossack another. The schlemiel and kibitzer who could ride a horse, wield a saber, and make love no less violent than that of his crazed landlord—this is a wonderful persona, with a diapason of possibilities and suggestions from which story wells up.

What makes Babel unusual is that he not only practiced this fictional ploy in his writing, but that he lived it day by day. He covered his Jewishness, his basic decency, his intellectual distinction, as the boy covered his impotence, by making up stories. He was Lyutov—the Russian name means the opposite of what Babel was, "ferocious"—not only for the actual Cossacks in field and bivouac but also for the reader of the book that resulted.

Babel was not, of course, just along for the ride. His assignment was to write patriotic dispatches from the front and, at the front, to keep reminding everyone of the splendid future that Bolshevism had in store for them. All the articles known to have been written by him for his paper, the *Red Cavalryman*, are

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A History of the Family

EDITED BY ANDRÉ BURGUIÈRE, CHRISTIANE KLAPISCH-ZUBER, MARTINE SEGALEN, AND FRANÇOISE ZONABEND

VOLUME I. DISTANT WORLDS, ANCIENT WORLDS
Translated by Sarah Hanbury-Tenison, Rosemary Morris, and Andrew Wilson
Introduction by Claude Lévi-Strauss and Georges Duby
VOLUME II. THE IMPACT OF MODERNITY
Translated by Sarah Hanbury-Tenison
Introduction by Jack Goody
This monumental two-volume work brings together experts from every discipline to reveal what each epoch can tell us about the family.

The essays of Volume I, which move from prehistory to antiquity to the middle ages, trace the evolution of the family from primate behavior to codified practices and relate these developments to religious, economic, and governmental concerns from land ownership to dynastic control and the maintenance of public order.

The shock of modernity shapes the story in Volume II, as the authors explore the impact of the industrial revolution, socialism, and contemporary practices from birth control to the widespread employment of women on the forms and norms of the family.
Volume 1: 47 halftones, 37 line illus., 704 pp.
Volume 2: 42 halftones, 14 line illus., 30 tables 600 pp.
Belknap Press • each volume $39.95 cloth

Only Paradoxes to Offer

French Feminists and the Rights of Man

JOAN WALLACH SCOTT

When French feminists such as Olympe de Gouges, Jeanne Deroin, Hubertine Auclert and Madeleine Pelletier argued for political rights in the context of liberal democracy they faced an impossible choice. On the one hand, they insisted that the differences between men and women were irrelevant for citizenship. On the other hand, because they acted on behalf of women, they introduced the very idea of difference they sought to eliminate. In this new book, remarkable in both its findings and its methodology, award-winning historian Joan Wallach Scott reads feminist history in terms of this paradox of sexual difference.
$27.95 cloth

The Mobilization of Intellect

French Scholars and Writers during the Great War

MARTHA HANNA

France went to war in 1914 not only in the trenches but also in the mind. When President Poincaré called upon the intellectual elite to contribute to the war effort with "their pens and their words," the union sacrée of scholars and writers—including Henri Bergson, Pierre Duhem, Ernest Lavisse, and Emile Durkheim—united French intellect against German Kultur. This is the first study of the power of French pens and words during and after the Great War.
$39.95 cloth

Biologists under Hitler

UTE DEICHMANN

TRANSLATED BY THOMAS DUNLAP
Biologists under Hitler is the first book to examine the impact of Nazism on the lives and research of a generation of German biologists. Drawing on previously unutilized archival material, Ute Deichmann, herself a biologist, explores not only what happened to the biologists forced to emigrate but also the careers, science, and crimes of those who stayed in Germany.
$39.95 cloth

Reading Berlin 1900

PETER FRITZSCHE

The great cities at the turn of the century were mediated by words—newspapers, advertisements, signs, and schedules—by which the inhabitants lived, dreamed, and imagined their surroundings. In this original study of the classic text of urban modernism—the newspaper page—Peter Fritzsche analyzes how reading and writing dramatized Imperial Berlin and anticipated the modernist sensibility that celebrated discontinuity, instability, and transience.
14 halftones • $39.95 cloth

At bookstores or from
Harvard University Press
800 448 2242
http://www.hup.harvard.edu

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

printed here as an appendix. There are only four, and here is a sample of the general level: "That is what they are like, our heroic nurses! Caps off to our nurses! Soldiers and commanders, show respect to our nurses."

These poster girls, needless to say, are not to be found in the diary. There is not a trace in the diary to suggest that the party line that he dutifully paid out when required was for him anything other than what he calls it: fairy tales. Jews in general and all Jews of Babel's intellectual level naturally sided with the Revolution and its promise of delivery from the ultimate oppression of the czar, but "K. Lyutov" mechanically extolled the rosy future without a shred of private conviction. Babel was doomed anyway, but had the 1920 diary fallen into the hands of his Cheka cronies, he might have been shot sooner.

Augustan Peter Pan

JOHN GAY: A PROFESSION OF FRIENDSHIP. *By David Nokes. Oxford University Press. $39.95.*

Reviewed by ARTHUR J. WEITZMAN

John Gay (1685–1732) has the reputation among English Augustans—Alexander Pope, Jonathan Swift, John Arbuthnot, Matthew Prior, and their witty friends—for being a light versifier, a crafter of rococo sexual innuendo, and a shameless seeker of patronage in the royal court of Queen Anne and the first two Georges. His most enduring and endearing work will always be *The Beggar's Opera* (the inspiration for Brecht and Weill's *Threepenny Opera*). An imaginative amalgm of drama and songs combining low-life in Newgate prison with satire of Parliament and the aristocracy, Gay's immensely successful invention gave birth to ballad opera and musical comedy. It was Swift who suggested to Gay that he write a "Newgate Pastoral" (an oxymoron at that time of history); this *coup de théâtre* took place in Newgate prison, a brothel, and at a public execution with a cast of thieves, fences, their molls, and their "wives."

Readers of poetry from this brilliant era of satire may also remember his *Trivia*, an evocation of the streets of London before the existence of sidewalks, streetlights, sewers, and police. This mock-georgic poem added a new English word but now provides the perfect antidote to the Hollywood image (as in *The Madness of King George*) of eighteenth-century powdered wigs, silk waistcoats, and multitudes of petticoats in marbled drawing rooms, where the bon ton exchanged bon mots.

The most interesting aspect of Gay's career, as noted by David Nokes in his splendid biography, is the rise from obscurity in Barnstaple, where he was born, to a position of court eminence and finally burial in Westminster Abbey. An ironist to the end, Gay wrote his own epitaph for his tomb:

> Life is a jest; and all things show it,
> I thought so once; but now I know it

(Samuel Johnson, who included Gay in his *Lives of the Poets*, thought these lines more suitably scribbled on the windows of a brothel.) But, as Mr. Nokes reveals, history has not been kind to him or his tomb in the pantheon of English worthies, for his words can no longer be read or seen. Since 1939, when medieval wall paintings were discovered near his monument, Gay's tomb has reposed in "a dusty attic store-room."

This biography, then, rehabilitates a writer easily overlooked or trivialized because he so rarely caught the sublime and was eclipsed by the so-much-more-trenchant gifts of Pope and Swift. This triumvirate of satirists made the serious amusing and what was amusing they treated with mock-seriousness, such as the loss of woman's lock of hair, which Pope cleverly likened to the fall of Troy. Kenneth Clark called the unique sensibility of Enlightenment art the smile of reason. The Victorians, however, despised their humor. which seemed to them cruel, but the revolution of taste in the form of drier irony in the 1920s brought them back. Every undergraduate now is forced to read Swift's *Modest Proposal*, a precursor of black comedy, or Pope's *Rape of the Lock*. Gay in his role of understrapper and pupil took hints from these writings and his friends' outright suggestions to produce that sexual frisson which appealed to the eighteenth-century reader of poetry. Hence his reputation as

✪ ARTHUR J. WEITZMAN teaches in the English Department at Northeastern University and is co-editor of *The Scriblerian*.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

an Augustan Peter Pan, a retailer of politically *in*correct and "coy eroticism":

> Get you a lass that's young and tight,
> Whose arms are, like her apron, white; . . .
> She might each morn your tea attend,
> And on your wrist your ruffle mend;
> Then if you break a roguish jest,
> Or squeeze her hand, or pat her breast,
> She cries, oh dear sir, don't be naught[y]!
> And blushes speak her last night's fault.
>
> "Work for a Cooper"

Zealously condemning such cavalier treatments of female dependents by the Tory satirists of this era, academic feminists call these verses misogynistic and accuse this club of men of making war against women. If he wishes to bring Gay into the postmodern mainstream, which is increasingly hostile to wit and irony, and patronizing males, Mr. Nokes has his work cut out for him.

Mr. Nokes's strategy for rehabilitating Gay is to distance him from his patrons and friends. He makes much of Gay's reluctant compliance in the patronage system and his nonassertive character. "I have not and fear never shall have a will of my own," Gay admitted, and was easily manipulated and advised by Pope and Swift, who often acted as father figures to him.

Psychologically, he seems passive-dependent, a man who was, in Nokes's words, "overweight, unwell, deeply private, and consumed with an overpowering sense of social inferiority." Nokes adds: "Gay retained the physical appearance of a provincial clown."

Dependent on the largess of aristocrats such as the Earls of Burlington and Queensbury, Gay spent his whole life, from the time he escaped from his apprenticeship to a London silk mercer, living out of a trunk and having meals and board supplied by patrons. This poet's work was mainly commissioned—produced for an occasion to please a patron or strictly to make money.

John Gay, Nokes maintains, was acutely conscious of his inferior connections, the ignominy of being an apprentice in a class-ridden society. Added to this was his decidedly ambiguous sexual identity, which led not only to a bachelor's life but to a record of never having a sexual relationship with a woman. The author of this biography claims to detect in a very trendy analysis of his poetry a homosexual topos of female garments, which become a fetish, thus betraying "a transvestite fascination with women's clothing which seems to go beyond the necessary expertise of a silk-mercer's apprentice." He has in mind such lines as these:

> What force of thoughts, what numbers can
> express,
> Th'inconstant equipage of female dress?
> How the strait stays the slender waist constrain,
> How to adjust the manteau's sweeping
> train?
> What fancy can the petticoat surround,
> With the capacious hoop of whalebone
> bound?
>
> "The Fan"

Nokes finds it also significant that in the fable featuring "The Hare and Many Friends," the former is made female. Desperately escaping from hunting hounds, she calls upon her many "friends"—a horse, bull, goat, sheep, and calf—to save her. (In this tale, the hare soon discovers that each "friend" finds a good reason to excuse himself, a good example of unsentimental realism.) "His instinctive sense of social vulnerability finds its most natural expression in the adoption of a female persona. This is highly characteristic," Mr. Nokes concludes, drawing a very debatable moral from this fable. He argues, on less than definitive evidence, that Gay was probably a latent homosexual.

Reading literature for its homosexual content has, in English departments these days, become a sophisticated method of "outing" the famous of the past. While Nokes avoids the excesses and Manicheanism of "queer theory," he clearly reflects the feminist and gay agenda of dividing art styles and themes according to gender. The problem with this analysis is that the practitioners of "queer theory" select evidence almost as an art form. In fairness to David Nokes, he applies these theories cautiously but, nevertheless, with distorting effect.

Female fetishism is almost totally absent in Gay's greatest works, *Trivia* and *The Beggar's Opera,* where the point of view is clearly masculine. Moreover, the hero of *The Beggar's Opera,* Macheath, the highwayman, is both ro-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

manticized as thief and womanizer, a swashbuckling pirate celebrated as a figure in a Walter Mitty dream. He is saved from hanging at the last moment surrounded by his many "wives" at the whim of the playwright/beggar, who fears his "opera" will become thereby a tragedy (happy endings being the vogue in 1728).

Nokes sometimes just can't quite accept the aesthetic values of writers who coalesced into a club of satirists during the reign of Queen Anne. They avoided personal poetry in favor of civic expression often based on Roman or French models, which were then travestied or ironically overturned from epic to mock epic. Yet he shrewdly reveals how Gay transformed his own neurotic concerns about dependence and independence into high art, paying court to the famous and rich, and yet yearning to tell truth about them. He thus accounts for Gay's poetry in these personal terms, where the poet alternates between praise and satire often in the same poems: "There is a subversiveness in Gay's temperament which, though never explicitly acknowledged, inspired the ambiguous satiric tone of so many of his works. Reduced to domestic service, hanging on by his finger-nails to the fringes of literary society, he was at once desperate not to give offence, yet simultaneously itching to do exactly that."

The Beggar's Opera thus became for its author a vehicle for subverting society by the frame device of a beggar narrator—an extension of his own role as dependent. At the same time, the beggar's ironic disregard of genre, the mixing of high and low society, the double entendres, the use of stand-ins for the leading politicians—for example, the corrupt Robert Walpole—all tend toward a sly satiric attack on society. Mr. Nokes makes a good case for Gay's maturing from the place-seeking court poet—flattering the great and maker of light verse and easy iambics in octosyllabic couplets and heroic couplets—to the subversive terror of ministers. In the last years, with his phenomenal success with *The Beggar's Opera* providing a windfall, prestige, and confidence, Gay became much more the populist, praising the virtues of the city against the country gentry and court aristocrats, who never awarded him with the patronage he felt was his due. (Although appointed commissioner of lotteries, a sinecure that paid a paltry £150 or £7,500 in 1990s money, Gay always felt overlooked.) In Nokes's account, the indolent poet who lolled about the sofas of the earls, dukes, duchesses, princesses, and royal mistresses, and who paid court to the ladies, metamorphosed into a moralist and satirist crossing boundaries and bending genres in a show of independence.

Mr. Nokes has produced a prettified scenario of a maturing poet, who finally threw off the shackles of his dependency, as the London printing trade slowly developed the means by which a writer could earn a living, as did Pope by selling his work directly to the public. A Roman Catholic, barred from government patronage and regarded with suspicion as a Jacobite sympathizer with the Stuart monarchy, Pope took advantage of an expanding readership and booksellers to make a fortune. Gay slowly amassed enough money to establish himself in an independent household, but somehow never got around to moving out from the comforts provided for him by his duchess-patron.

Mr. Nokes detects a newly self-reliant and assertive Gay, the terror of ministers, in the late works, but one may legitimately doubt such a newly liberated Gay. Still, Mr. Nokes's ambitious biography, avoiding much of the jargon of his fellow academics, is rich in information and original research that will attract the specialist as well as the reader fascinated by the great literary figures of the eighteenth-century.

Let's Make a Deal

INEVITABLE ILLUSIONS: HOW MISTAKES OF REASON RULE OUR MINDS. *By Massimo Piatelli-Palmarini. John Wiley and Sons. $24.95.*

Reviewed by JIM HOLT

Most of us, with the exception of a few balmy romantics and Nietzschean dimwits, would agree that to be rational is a good thing. Generally speaking, it helps you get the most of what you want, regardless of what that might be. The price one pays for departures from reason can be steep. Suppose, to take

JIM HOLT is a book reviewer for the *Wall Street Journal* and a cultural commentator for the BBC.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

one form of irrationality, that your preferences happen to be "intransitive"; that you will choose, say crême brulée over gooseberry fool, and gooseberry fool over rice pudding, but you would rather have rice pudding than crême brulée. Then a clever person can turn you into a money pump. All he has to do is repeatedly offer you the next dessert in your preference loop—each time for an extra penny out of your pocket.

Or suppose that you give credence to a pair of contradictory propositions, thereby violating Aristotle's most basic law of rationality. You believe, for instance, both that *Snarks are many* and that *Snarks are one.* Then you are very gullible indeed, as you must perforce believe literally everything. For if you believe that *Snarks are many,* then you certainly believe *Either snarks are many or the national honor is worth saving.* But remember, you also believe that *Snarks are one*—that is, they are *not* many. And this, in combination with the previous proposition, saddles you with the belief that *The national honor is worth saving.* Which we know to be absurd.

These are among the more footling varieties of unreason. Few of us fall prey to them when we are not under the spell of hallucinogens. But there are more subtle forms of irrationality that pervade our everyday thinking, with equally unhappy result. Many of them have been detected by psychologists only in the last decade or two. Taken collectively, they point to the existence of a kind of cognitive unconscious, a welter of primitive pseudoreasoning strategies that can cause as much mischief as the unconscious that Freud discovered—and can be just as hard to straighten out. They reveal themselves in all their perversity when confronted by the puzzles, paradoxes, and brainteasers that the cognitive scientist Massimo Piatelli-Palmarini has assembled in *Inevitable Illusions,* an international bestseller in its original Italian edition that the author has now translated (with the help of Keith Botsford) into wonky, if serviceable, English.

For example. You have just been given a clinical test for a fatal disease. You are informed that you tested positive. The doctor tells you that the test is 99 percent reliable; to wit, only one in a hundred of those who test positive do not actually have the disease. He adds that this disease is estimated to affect a

THE AUTONOMOUS MALE OF ADAM SMITH
By Stewart Justman
Volume 14 in the Oklahoma Project for Discourse and Theory
The modern man imagines himself a stoic as he builds the wealth of the nation. By employing gender and political theory, Justman shows that Adam Smith's prudent man is by no means autonomous.
$14.95 Paper

THE GREEK LANGUAGE
By Leonard R. Palmer
"This survey makes excellent reading for anyone who needs a rapid review of the forms of Greek literary expression . . . an ideal textbook for teaching."—**Gregory Nagy, *Classical Journal.***
$21.95 Paper

From your bookseller, or
University of Oklahoma Press
Dept. MAQ9
1005 Asp Ave.
Norman, OK 73019
(Telephone: 1-800-627-7377)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

half a million Americans. Question: should you begin winding up your affairs?

If you are like most people, you reason as follows. "The accuracy of a test like the one I just took is a matter of biochemistry, not demography. How many other Americans might suffer from the disease is irrelevant to whether I have it. If the test is 99 percent reliable, then the likelihood that I am infected must be just that: 99 percent." On being told that the real chance you have the disease is around one in six, you are relieved but at the same time perplexed, if not downright skeptical. How could your intuition have been so grossly erroneous?

Because it is not *Bayesian*, that's why. If, as Bishop Butler famously declared, probability is the very guide of life, then something called Bayes' theorem is the very guide to probability. This elegant little formula—which may or may not have first been discovered by the eponymous Reverend Thomas Bayes, an obscure eighteenth-century English divine who lived in Tunbridge Wells—encodes nothing less than the ideally rational way of learning from experience. What it says, in a nutshell, is that if H is a hypothesis and E is some new bit of evidence, then

$$P(H \text{ given } E) = P(H) \times P(E \text{ given } H) \,/\, P(E).$$

In other words, the degree of confidence one should place in the hypothesis in the light of the new evidence is equal to one's prior confidence in the hypothesis multiplied by one's confidence in the evidence given the hypothesis and then divided by one's confidence in the evidence apart from the hypothesis. This seems formidably abstract, but applied to the preceding case of the clinical test for the fatal disease it is quite easy to grasp. Suppose the test is administered to a sample of one hundred thousand people. As two-tenths of one percent of Americans (500,000 out of 250 million) are infected, about 200 of those in the sample will test positive because they have the disease. Another thousand or so will be false positives, since the test is just 99 percent reliable. Therefore, among the roughly 1,200 who test positive, only about 200, or one in six, will do so because they actually have the disease. Testing positive thus raises the likelihood of being infected from .2 percent to approximately 17 percent—something to be seriously concerned about, but far from a death sentence.

To minimize risk and maximize advantage, we *must* steer by Bayes' theorem—that can rigorously be proved. Unfortunately, we seldom do, as Piatelli-Palmarini's vexing examples make clear. Our brains seem to be wired in a way that makes us bad Bayesians. Consequently, our spontaneous attempts to convert old probabilities into new ones based on the evidence before us tend to be wildly, disastrously off the mark.

But just taking Bayes to heart is not enough. That might save one from the Juror's Fallacy and the Gambler's Fallacy, to mention two varieties of "cold" irrationality. Yet it is no prophylactic against the Historian's Fallacy—the tendency to see essentially random events as having been predictable in retrospect (and to conveniently scapegoat whoever should have "seen it coming"). Nor does it afford complete protection against the dread Dutch Bookie, that evil genius who, on detecting the slightest glitch in your probability beliefs, fashions a seductive series of bets that is logically guaranteed to ruin you, come what may.

There is also "hot" irrationality to worry about, the kind that results when our cognitive processes are, without us realizing it, infiltrated and suborned by emotion and desire. Take our absurd overconfidence in the judgments we make. Piatelli-Palmarini describes experiments where subjects said they were virtually 100 percent sure of the answers they gave to various general-knowledge questions, even when those answers were mistaken. They pronounced themselves certain, for instance, that the potato originated in Ireland, and were even willing to put money on it, when, as we all know, the potato came from Peru. Alarmingly, people appear to be the most overconfident in the areas where they have the most expertise, and hence can do the greatest harm. Another study (not cited by Piatelli-Palmarini) showed that clinically depressed people, though not notably rational in other respects, at least have a more realistic grasp of their capabilities.

Overconfidence is one of what Piatelli-Palmarini jocularly calls "The Seven Deadly Sins" against reason. The deadliest of all, in his opinion, is our penchant for assigning a high probability to a sequence of events that, though individually quite unlikely, link up to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

form a story that has purchase on our imagination. Since this is the very weakness that Iago exploited to bring about the downfall of the Moor, the author labels it the Othello Effect. If he were American, he might have called it the Oliver Stone Effect.

Some of the items in this nosegay of puzzlements are as amusing as they are trivial. In what direction would you set out from Los Angeles if you wished to fly to Reno, Nevada? Pose this at a dinner party and the unanimous response will be "northeast." In fact, Reno lies 20 degrees west of Los Angeles, but you have to consult a real map, not the skewed one in your mind's eye, to believe it. Others bring out bizarre attitudes that most of us unwittingly harbor. Why should we tend to *avoid* risk when we are faced with financial gain but *seek* it when we are faced with loss? And why, in the name of reason, should we think of the United States as being somehow more identical to itself than Brunei is to Brunei?

Finally there is the mother of all puzzles, the one that foils the keenest minds and keeps foiling them even after their error has been demonstrated. It is called The Monty Hall Problem—or Dilemma, or Paradox—after the emcee of the defunct TV game show "Let's Make a Deal." It goes like this. There are three doors on stage, labeled A, B, and C. Behind one of them is a sports car; behind the other two are goats. You get to choose one of the doors and keep whatever is behind it. Let's suppose you choose door A. Now, instead of showing you what's behind it, Monty Hall slyly opens door B and reveals . . . a goat. He then offers you the option of switching to door C. Should you take it?

The smarter you are, the more strongly your intuition will tell you that there is no reason to switch. Once you know the car is not behind door B, the probability must be split 50-50 between doors A and C, right?

Not right. When you first chose door A, there was a one-in-three chance you would win the car. Monty's crafty revelation that there's a goat behind door B gives you no new information about what's behind the door you initially chose—you already *knew* one of the other pair of doors had to conceal a goat—so the likelihood that the car is behind door A remains one in three. Which means that, with door B eliminated, there is a two-thirds chance that the car is behind door C. Therefore you ought to switch—as any good Bayesian could have told you. "Don't try this game with a lot of people in the room," Piatelli-Palmarini wisely cautions. "The arguments won't end!"

Perhaps it is unhealthy to dwell on such subtleties of reason as those raised by *Inevitable Illusions.* One could end up like Buridan's Ass. This is the perfectly rational beast, imagined by the medieval philosopher Jean Buridan, who starved to death when placed halfway between two identical bales of hay since it could discern no reason to move in one direction rather than the other. That, I suppose, is a peril. But, when you think about it, is it not better to be Buridan's Ass than Monty Hall's Ass?

Virtucrats on the Loose

THE SECRET SIX: THE TRUE STORY OF THE MEN WHO CONSPIRED WITH JOHN BROWN. *By Edward J. Renehan, Jr. Crown. $25.*

Reviewed by J. C. FURNAS

This amply researched account of the group of grown men who long ago helped make Harpers Ferry a household word has no epigraph. My suggestion: "What fools these mortals be!" That each meant well is about all one can say for any of them, for their and Brown's target, slavery, *was* an unqualified national cancer. Five of the six were men of mark who should have shown powers of mature judgment. Yet Brown's powerful charisma was too much for them. Whenever common sense sought to surface among them, their God-chosen Yankee shaman came along to revive the verbose spell that doomed them to be sorcerer's apprentices. Mr. Renehan's careful details almost persuade one to believe that this utterly unfunny comedy actually happened. That it actually did is a once-in-a-blue-moon miracle of absurdity.

The flavor of the Six is best tasted in their most versatile member, Dr. Samuel Gridley

---

✪ J. C. FURNAS's books include *Goodbye to Uncle Tom* and *The Road to Harpers Ferry.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Howe of Boston, a genuine benefactor of mankind, prominent supporter of decent treatment of the insane, and pioneer in the rehabilitation of the handicapped. His unprecedented success in rescuing from vegetation Laura Bridgman, a blind deaf-mute, was as famous and important (c. 1850) as the case of Helen Keller in our time. In his impulsive youth he earned a different glory as a fighting doctor in the Greek struggle with Turkey, returning with a Greek knighthood and the gold-inlaid helmet that Byron took to Greece. He married the beautiful, red-haired, witty, and poetic Julia Ward, an heiress now remembered for writing "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" and for her part in the women's clubs movement. Her man was, however, a spoiled-brat vacillator and provides the first of the baffling incongruities that the Six presented: Why didn't this experienced dealer with insanity identify Brown as a mental case accurately described by Stephen Vincent Benét: "obstinacy, failure and cold prayers . . . with a certain minor prophet air / That fooled the world to thinking him half-great"?

Mr. Renehan is pretty gingerly about the subject, but even he calls Brown "paranoid" and "a madman who would lead all who marched with him to certain death." And why didn't this veteran of guerrilla warfare, the only Sixter who had ever smelled powder, refuse to take Brown's planned attack on Harpers Ferry seriously? Though Howe sometimes blew cold as well as hot, he along with the others ended in endorsing and financing it. The deep religiosity that moved all the Six may partly explain this neglect. For, as Mr. Renehan's data show, to press at all hard on strategy and tactics was to make Brown levitate verbally and pull rank as God's chosen warrior for annihilating slavery; no matter how shaky the thing might sound to mortal ears, God would make it succeed. That always worked, for his disciples had all been soaked in religiosity from the cradle on. Two of them, indeed, were ministers of the gospel.

Stalwart Reverend Thomas Wentworth Higginson, pastor of the radical Unitarians of Worcester, Massachusetts, strengthened that influence by showing that, in political practicality, Brown could be a useful tool for detonation. Win or lose, the projected attack to arm and rouse slaves in Virgina and elsewhere would cause such a sensation that in the South, recently exasperated beyond caution by Northerners' revulsion from the new Fugitive Slave Law, would actually dive into the secession that her hotheads were threatening. If war would ensue, the North would be carrying out Brown's God-written prescription: Purge the nation with blood.

Such "disunionism" was already lively among ardent Abolitionists. The Six sometimes even acknowledged among themselves that what they and Brown had in mind amounted to treason. Mr. Renehan records Higginson's tendency in this direction. He vigorously preached Abolition; he helped funnel runaway slaves into Canada; he raised Harpers Ferry money. . . . He turned violent leading a Boston mob of Abolitionists to rescue a runaway about to be sent back. The rescue failed, but Higginson got himself a slashed face and risked a charge of murder, for shots were fired and one killed a Federal deputy. And once Higginson got his war, he became volunteer colonel of the North's first regiment of former slaves.

The other clergyman was the Reverend Theodore Parker, renowned theologian who preached Abolition and heresy so brilliantly that no Boston church would harbor him. His flock hired a Boston concert hall for him on Sundays. Others were so hot against him that he kept a loaded pistol in the desk on which he wrote sermons. He could be charming in private, but Mr. Renehan leaves no doubt about his earnestness about slavery and great relish for the word *treason.* It finally took tuberculosis to stop him. When Brown's hallucinatory bungling ended on the gallows, Parker was off seeking health in Italy. Dying, he instructed his doctor between hemorrhages to arrange a spiritualistic séance for his and Brown's souls, so they might tell all about their God-sponsored comradeship.

The Six's devoted coordinator was Franklin Sanborn, a young schoolmaster who fielded incessant pleas for money for Brown. Two of his most remunerative targets were George Luther Stearns and John Murray Forbes, one a minor, one a major capitalist. Even those presumably hardheaded men of business allowed Brown to muddle them so thoroughly that they failed to spot his patent pathological state.

The sixth victim was the only non-Yankee, Gerrit Smith. Heir to a young real estate em-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pire in New York State, he acquired still more land in other states while staying plutocratically solvent, so he doubtless had business acumen. But in private Smith was a cruel parody of goodwill and piety. His huge manor house was chronically full of "godly" guests and religious books. He preached lay sermons. His tenants resented his attempts to play Lord Bountiful. He swallowed whole that remarkable Millerite religious end-of-the-world craze and confidently planned to ascend the assigned hilltop on the great day and be snatched up bodily to heaven. His only uneasiness about it was fear lest he and his wife lose each other in the crowd. Now stir in Smith's ardent Abolitionism and obviously you have a set-up for Brown when he came asking for lands on which to settle a colony of runaway blacks.

Smith gave acreage in the Adirondacks—poor sustenance land, but Brown had a religio-magico-mystical complex about mountains as God-designed refuges. Many Smith dollars, of course, were forthcoming to pay for the pikes with which Brown planned to arm rebellious slaves. The miniature Harpers Ferry catastrophe, understandably involving threats of criminal prosecution of Sixters as accessory to murder and treason, disorganized Smith's vulnerable psyche. For three months he had to be kept gibbering and moaning in an asylum.

That was the stiffest penalty any Sixter had to pay. Howe panicked, skipping in and out of Canada as his lawyers changed their minds about his actual legal risks. One serious attempt to arrest Sanborn at home in Concord was aborted by an uprising of his outraged neighbors that sounds as if it were choreographed by the Keystone Kops. Higginson stayed put, scorning the other Sixters for "abandoning" Brown, waiting for the arrest that never came. Meanwhile, he loyally, if absurdly, set about organizing another raiding party to kidnap the governor of Virginia, who was to be held hostage out at sea for Brown. It never got off the ground.

Anyway, Brown wanted no rescue. Proving the only member of the cast who finally made sense, he said: "I am worth inconceivably more [for the Abolitionist cause] to hang than for any other purpose." He must have thought that that was how God had moved in His mysterious way to make Harpers Ferry a success.

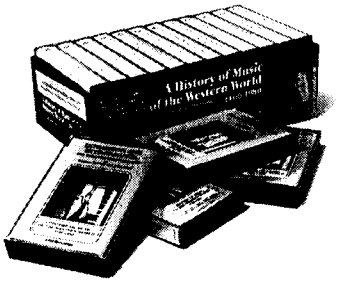
A History of Music of the Western World 1100-1980 *A 12-Cassette Program*

"...Condenses a vast subject into a concise and appealing format that stimulates the mind and whets the appetite for music."
Cleveland Plain Dealer

This new program is for anyone who likes music and would like to know more about it. Hundreds of musical examples are combined with explanatory comments by 15 prominent musical authorities. The stimulating discussions covering the period 1100 to 1980 are richly illustrated with authentic musical examples performed by major international orchestras and chamber groups.

The program is on 12 full-length audio-cassettes. Featured commentators include Dr. Christopher Page of Oxford University, Anthony Rooley, founder of the Early Music Centre in London, Christopher Hogwood, director of the Handel and Haydn Society, and many others. For the first time you can hear insightful discussion of the roots of our rich musical heritage and then moments later hear the actual pieces being played. As enthusiastic reviewer James Kinsey Bowman declared, "It's wonderful–no more flipping from book chapter to record 3, band 5. It's all right here."

Full information on lecturers, composers, and performing artists is included with each cassette. This comprehensive 12-cassette program is only $89.50 postpaid. Satisfaction guaranteed or your money back, order #11100. To place your order **call toll-free 1-800-243-1234**, (203) 453-9794, fax us at (203) 453-9774, e-mail: 74537.550@compuserve.com, or write to:



Contents

1. Medieval Music 1100-1480
2. Music of the Renaissance 1480-1600
3. Baroque Period 1600-1750
4. Classical Period 1750-1830
5. Romantic Period 1830-1900
6. Modern Period 1900-1945
7. Contemporary Music 1945-Present
8. Approaches to Popular Music
9. History of Percussion Instruments
10. Story of Reggae and Calypso
11. Introduction to English Folk Music
12. Instruments around the World

AUDIO-FORUM®
Room F333, 96 Broad St., Guilford, CT 06437

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Exiting Extremism

NEW FRENCH THOUGHT: POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY. *Edited by Mark Lilla. Princeton University Press. $45.*

AN INTELLECTUAL HISTORY OF LIBERALISM. *By Pierre Manent. Translated by Rebecca Balinski. Princeton University Press. $19.95.*

Reviewed by DAMON LINKER

Do we live in a post-modern age? If we admit that we face philosophical *aporias* more intractable than those of the past but are also fairly certain that remarkably little has changed in the world of actual social practices and institutions to justify the belief that the West has lived through the advent of a post-modern age, then is there reason to question the convictions of so many of our contemporaries? If we agree that there are very good reasons to be hesitant about affirming many aspects of modern experience, and yet still wish to maintain a skeptical distance from the unrestricted condemnations of modernity one finds in so much of twentieth-century thought, where are we to turn for an alternative?

Until fairly recently, one would not have expected French thinkers to contribute much to such a quest; after all, since the end of World War II, the intellectual scene in France has been dominated by Heideggerians of various stripes, from Jean-Paul Sartre and Maurice Merleau-Ponty to Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault. But as followers of Continental thought are no doubt aware, post-modernism has become passé in France during the last decade or so. In fact, the French are currently living through a renaissance of thoughtful reflection about the character of modern life and liberal politics.

Now, thanks to a series of books recently published by Princeton University Press under the title New French Thought, edited by Thomas Pavel and Mark Lilla—including *New French Thought: Political Philosophy* (a collection of short essays by various authors edited by Lilla) and Pierre Manent's *An Intellectual History of Liberalism*—English-speaking readers now have the chance to survey the work of the most impressive contemporary French thinkers in translation. But these books are useful for far more than satiating scholarly curiosity about the latest fad in French intellectual life. They also contain numerous examples of how to think through extreme philosophical positions, of how to resist the temptation of totalizing critiques of reason, morality, and modernity. Moreover, the best pieces in the series serve as splendid examples of how we might begin to think about these subjects using subtler categories than the breathtakingly broad ones bequeathed to us by such philosophers as Friedrich Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger.

The current wave of thinking in France began in the mid-1970s but first attained prominence a decade later with the publication of a number of books and articles by the then-youthful philosophy professors Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut. In the most important of these, *La pensée 68: Essai sur l'anti-humanisme contemporain* (translated as *French Philosophy of the Sixties: An Essay On Antihumanism*), Ferry and Renaut argued that the philosophers associated with the student riots of May 1968—Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan, and Pierre Bourdieu—combined bits and pieces of Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, and Heidegger into a full frontal assault against reason, morality, truth, and the "humanism" that supposedly inspired modernity. Abandoning all hope for Marxian redemption through revolution or reconciliation with modernity's discontents through Freudian therapy, the *penseurs '68* each ended up advocating a purely destructive, meta-critique of modern life. Arriving on the scene at the same time as Victor Farias's much-maligned, although largely accurate account of Heidegger's involvement with Nazism in the 1930s (*Heidegger and Nazism*), Ferry and Renaut's book sent shock waves through the Parisian intellectual establishment. Together with the Farias book, Ferry and Renaut forced a public debate over whether or not the complete rejection of liberal modernity found in Heidegger and his followers must necessarily issue in an undirected enthusiasm for any extreme political program, of either the Left or Right, that promises a rupture with everyday life. According to Ferry and Renaut's reading of Heidegger's thought and its influence, the philosopher's involvement with Nazism was not a tragic error, as some of his admirers would

✪ DAMON LINKER is a doctoral student in political science at Michigan State University.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

have us believe, but was instead determined by his philosophy as a whole.

This line of argument was explored more fully in their 1988 book, *Heidegger et les modernes* (translated as *Heidegger and Modernity*). In this book, Ferry and Renaut concentrated on Heidegger's notorious, inflammatory assertion that America, the Soviet Union, and Nazi Germany were "metaphysically the same," as well as on the French Heideggerian Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe's perverse claim, made during the height of the Farias controversy, that "Nazism is a humanism." Looking into Heidegger's thought for an explanation of how he and his students could come to equate humanism with Nazism, Ferry and Renaut concluded that all Heideggerianisms arise from a bald revulsion at everything modern and hence inevitably lead to incoherent and relentless attacks on every conceivable aspect of modernity—reason, philosophy, technology, democracy, and even "the human" as such. For Ferry and Renaut, the incontestable evidence for this interpretation was the fact that the only criticism of Nazism that Heidegger could manage after the war and that Lacoue-Labarthe attempted in defense of his teacher, involved the claim that the Nazis did not go *far enough* in their attempt to wrest free of the modern age. The astonishing implication of this view was that Hitler's movement allowed itself to be poisoned by the same humanism that supposedly infects all modern forms of social life.

Despite the fact that their books pack a powerful polemical punch, Ferry and Renaut's challenges to Heidegger and his French followers are far from decisive. Still, the importance of their work lies not in its incomplete refutation of post-modern philosophy as a whole—nor does it lie in their ultimately unconvincing positive program of reinvigorating the notion of human rights through a turn to the transcendental idealism of Kant and Fichte. Instead, Ferry and Renaut deserve credit for opening up an intellectual space in which, for the first time since before World War II, a more humanistic debate could take place among those in a new generation of intellectuals.

So far that debate has been far from homogeneous. One stream of thinking has its source in the rich French tradition of anthropology and is represented in the Princeton volumes by Marcel Gauchet. Following in the footsteps of Louis Dumont—the anthropologist whose work in the 1960s on the development of modern individualism placed him solidly outside of the intellectual fashions of the time—Gauchet emphasizes the question of the origins and character of modernity. In the two essays collected here ("Tocqueville" and "Primitive Religion and the Origins of the State"), Gauchet asserts that we live in a time of "collective atheism." Ever since primitive man externalized the source of his political community in unchanging gods, human history has been characterized by the progressive retreat of the divine from human life. Modern, technological, liberal society is the final stage in this process of *le désenchantement du monde*—the stage of "incertitude" and "inexorable destabilization" in which "everything is contestable, everything can be established or instituted other than it is." In this age—the "democratic age"—it finally becomes clear that the progressive goal of Western history has been the realization of a world without divine foundations, without permanence, without religion.

According to this telling of the tale of modernity, the political and intellectual extremism of our time is revealed to be a partial reaction against disenchantment. Only nominally atheistic, the radicals of the twentieth century must be understood to be motivated by desires that have been insufficiently purged of the longing for transcendence—a longing that can never be satisfied under modern conditions in which "the disappearance of God is built into the social mechanism itself." Interpreted in this way, Heidegger and his followers begin to resemble godless theologians engaged in a monumental act of self-deception, waiting expectantly for a historical caesura that will never arrive. As opposed to Ferry and Renaut's challenge to prevailing philosophical opinion, Gauchet's succeeds at confronting Heideggerian accounts of Western history on their own terms by offering an alternative interpretation of the teleological process they presuppose.

But it is on precisely this point that Pierre Manent breaks with Gauchet. Following the lead of Leo Strauss, the professor of political philosophy who has had such a strongly contentious influence on the study of political theory in the United States, Manent denies that the history of the West can be adequately

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

understood when it is interpreted to have had a single, progressive goal from the beginning. Instead, in the two essays and book-length study translated in the New French Thought series, Manent claims that we can only reach an accurate self-understanding by realizing that both modern thought and politics arose as part of a self-conscious attempt on the part of such philosophers as Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Locke to overthrow ancient thought and politics. In other words, like Strauss, Manent attempts to revive the eighteenth-century *querelle entre les anciens et les modernes* in the hope that it will inspire a deeper understanding of the fundamental human alternatives in both politics and thinking. Manent believes that any such encounter will lead the reader to the conclusion that "the Greek understanding of law was superior to the modern understanding," and that the peculiar contradictions of modern politics and society have their origins in the inferior understanding of the modern political philosophers who "founded" modernity.

As the untranslated subtitle to *An Intellectual History of Liberalism—"Dix leçons"*—makes clear, Manent intends each of his brief meditations on ten modern political theorists to stand as a scale model of a single antinomy of modern life that can be traced back to the consequences, intended and unintended, of the ideas promulgated by these modern "founders." To cite one example, in his chapter on Montesquieu, Manent seeks to demonstrate that the theory of separation of powers articulated in *De l'esprit des lois*, far from being limited to institutional arrangements, was meant to penetrate deep into civil society to produce a culture characterized by conflict and disunity. Hence, Montesquieu's political philosophy as a whole ends up being a recipe for political and social weakness, as individuals, classes, and interest groups jockey for position, each mustering just enough power and support to keep the other individuals, classes, and groups from taking control of the political or social agenda, yet never able to acquire the power necessary to accomplish a positive goal. In other words, liberalism attains its end of peace and prosperity by emasculating citizenship, by turning men into self-interested bourgeois beings, more willing to "compromise" over passionate desires and interests than to "deliberate" rationally about "the good."

Despite their disagreements over the character of Western history as a whole, Manent and Gauchet share the conviction that the radical intellectuals and philosophers of our century were mistaken to believe that the modern world could be overcome. For Gauchet, reconciliation with modernity is our only practical possibility; Manent agrees, although he holds out the chance of escape at the level of theory through the study of the great philosophers of the past. Both foster an underlying nostalgia for a world we have lost, even if it is accompanied by an almost stoic willingness to accept the modern world as they understand it. It is not surprising then that both men are drawn to Tocqueville, a man who was willing to accept his fate as an aristocrat trapped in a democratic age, but who was also certain that something vital and important had been lost along with the spread of egalitarianism.

The work of these and others collected in the Princeton volumes leaves the reader both intellectually stimulated and hopeful for the future of philosophical debates on both sides of the Atlantic. At many points in the New French Thought series, one gets the sense that a genuinely fresh discussion has begun. However, at many other points there is, unfortunately, some cause for disappointment, mostly having to do with certain disturbing preoccupations in the work of the translated authors—preoccupations that limit their ability truly to move beyond the philosophical obsessions that have dominated so many impressive minds in this century.

Many of the authors in these volumes are inclined to stay within the orbit of a historicism that portrays "modernity" as a totalizing whole whose aim is the creation of a uniform, godless world. To be sure, their analyses are more nuanced, less hysterical than those that preceded them. Still, one wonders why they insist on returning, as if by magnetic attraction, to the same old paradigm.

While it might very well be helpful and even necessary for philosophers to concentrate on the character of "the modern" as such—perhaps something about modern life itself drives us to come to terms with it over and over again—one cannot help but suspect that such a focus means that something of fundamental importance will be missed in the details. The example of Tocqueville on this point is instructive. Both Gauchet and Manent are

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

drawn to Tocqueville, and both men offer interesting interpretations of his brilliant comments about the character of "the modern age" and "democracy" as such. However, perhaps both need to be reminded that Tocqueville did not write books exclusively about such comprehensive subjects; instead, he wrote books with titles like *Democracy in America* and *The Old Regime and the French Revolution.* He never lost sight of the fact that democracy, and perhaps even modernity itself, will take on distinct forms in distinct countries, each of which has its own unique history of political institutions and customs. In contrast, it is the later, virulently anti-modern thinkers such as Heidegger who have maintained that all nations are "metaphysically the same." Perhaps, seen from sufficient philosophical altitude, they are. But that is quite a different thing than saying that they are all *politically* the same. Judging from the works translated in the New French Thought series, the latest generation of French thinkers has not yet lowered its sights from the breathtaking vistas of Heideggerian generalizations to engage in a sober analysis of politics as an independent explanatory factor in human life.

There is a tendency in these essays, too, to give one-sided accounts of the role of human action and ideas in history. In doing so, Manent and Gauchet and others seem to be perpetuating one of the major differences between Nietzsche and Heidegger. The former claimed that the world is a creation of autonomous acts of human will and creativity, the latter that human beings are always thrown into a world of pre-existing references and meanings that they are ultimately powerless to change or control. In Nietzsche, man takes the place of God, somehow creating his own meaning out of nothingness; in Heidegger, man is swept into the historical flow of time like Augustine's fallen cipher carried along by the providence of a God who predetermines every aspect of his fate. It is unfortunate that too many of the authors in these volumes insist on situating themselves so close to either the one or the other of these polar extremes.

Versions of one or the other have been present in Rousseau, the German Romantics, and countless other thinkers on the Left and Right; they have formed a major part of the extreme challenge to Enlightenment skepticism and moderation since its beginnings. A more accurate, more truly humanistic account of the development of the modern age would recognize that it arose through a complex combination of philosophic intentions with political, social, economic, scientific, and religious events beyond the control of any one man or group of philosophers. To reduce the origins of modernity to the influence of a handful of books borders on conspiracy theory, as does the claim that history has a progressive logic all its own to which individuals contribute next to nothing. To the extent that the new French thinkers fail to accept the ambiguous conclusions that must, of necessity, accompany a dispassionate analysis of the world, they testify to their continued inability, or unwillingness, to think their way out of extremism, to embrace moderation as preferable to madness.

Imperial Impresario

MOSAIC: MEMOIRS. *By Lincoln Kirstein. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. $25.*

Reviewed by PETER DAILEY

Until the year before his death, few performances of the New York City Ballet took place at which Lincoln Kirstein, its co-founder and general director emeritus, was not visible, his chin cupped in his hand, superintending from his seat in the First Ring. Although Kirstein described himself, with characteristic diffidence, as an "amateur art-historian and student of post-Augustinian theology," he was known primarily for his heterogeneous activities as a patron, administrator, scholar, critic, publicist, curator, editor, and collector. Neither the positions Kirstein held, however, nor the books and articles he wrote—a "provisional" bibliography published in 1978 lists 478 entries—adequately convey the degree to which he shaped and sustained the cultural life of his time.

Kirstein's long collaboration with George Balanchine, whom he sought out in London in 1933 and persuaded to undertake a new career in New York, lasted until Balanchine's

✪ PETER DAILEY is a writer and attorney living in New York City.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

death in 1983. In explaining their unusual partnership, Kirstein noted, "He's an Imperial Russian. I'm Imperial American." Together they founded the succession of dance companies for which Balanchine created most of his greatest work, and the School of American Ballet, which along with training many of Balanchine's most memorable dancers, instilled in successive generations of students new standards of technique and an awareness of tradition as a source of renewal. For audiences during the 1940s and 1950s at the old Moorish Temple on West 55th Street, the stylistic hallmarks of Balanchine dancing—its speed, strength, and precision—came to seem as characteristic of New York at its best as the lower Manhattan skyline.

Kirstein's involvement with literature and the fine arts is less well known. As a twenty-year-old Harvard undergraduate he served, with R. P. Blackmur, as one of the founding editors of *Hound and Horn*, a literary quarterly modeled after T. S. Eliot's *Criterion*. Between 1927 and 1934, this journal published work by, among others, Eliot, Ezra Pound, Allen Tate, E. E. Cummings, and Hart Crane. (Its final issue, devoted to Henry James, helped launch the revival of interest in the novelist's work.)

With Edward M. M. Warburg and John Walker, III, later Director of the National Gallery, Kirstein organized the Harvard Society for Contemporary Art, an influential precursor of the Museum of Modern Art. The first Boston exhibitions of Picasso, Matisse, and Derain were mounted in rooms the Society leased over the Harvard Coop, as were shows devoted to Bauhaus design, American folk art, contemporary photography, and such tours de force as Buckminster Fuller's Dymaxion house and Alexander Calder's *Circus*.

During visits to London, Kirstein, thanks to his older sister, Mina Curtiss, the editor and translator of Proust's letters, found himself welcome at Bloomsbury houses, taken to Duncan Grant's studio, invited by E. M. Forster to tea and by John Maynard Keynes to an exhibit of Cezanne watercolors. (On one occasion Kirstein and his brother were summoned from their beds to perform an impromptu pas de trois with Lydia Lopokova for an audience that included Lytton Strachey.)

Mosaic, Kirstein's memoir of the first twenty-six years of his life, deals with these interesting people and events rather perfunctorily. It offers an episodic, at times fragmentary, account of his relationship with a dozen people whom Kirstein credits with liberating him from received ideas, secondhand opinions, and conventional notions of "good taste." As a boy in Boston, Kirstein stood on the corner of Commonwealth Avenue and Dartmouth Street and watched as Woodrow Wilson rode by, returning in defeat from Versailles. Kirstein's father, who was at his side, gave his ears a tweak to insure that he wouldn't forget. Most of the persons Kirstein describes in *Mosaic* administered similar, not always welcome, shocks.

Taken together, the most memorable of them—a boarding-school bully, Nijinsky's wife Romola, a merchant seaman who had been a friend of Hart Crane's, and G. I. Gurdjieff—make a distinctly unlikely and not particularly attractive assortment. All were "influential personal enigmas," but none more so than Gurdjieff, whom Kirstein first met in 1927 at the colony his followers had established at Le Prieuré in Fontainebleau. Despite the taint of charlatanism that had attached itself to Gurdjieff from the beginning—Wyndham Lewis characterized him as a "Levantine psychic shark"—Kirstein regards his example as decisive to his own development.

As an account of the education of a sensibility, *Mosaic* is bound to interest anyone who was ever puzzled by the seemingly irreconcilable character of Kirstein's enthusiasms. Although renowned as a champion of such modernists as Balanchine and Stravinsky, for most of his long career Kirstein had been fighting a spectacularly unsuccessful rearguard action against virtually every development in modern painting since Impressionism. The targets of a memorable 1948 article include the Museum of Modern Art, Clement Greenberg, and Matisse ("a decorator in the French taste, the Boucher of his epoch, whose sources in the miniatures and ceramics of Islam are, inch for inch, his superior"). Kirstein, who asserts he was born "in the 107th year of the nineteenth century," reveled in his hard-won notoriety; his efforts here are ingenious and unpersuasive, redeemed by his quirky intelligence and entertainingly provocative temper.

An obvious model for Kirstein's account, one that Kirstein tacitly acknowledges, is John Ruskin's *Praeterita*, which *Mosaic* resembles not only in its theme but in the erratic nature of the author's judgments and their essentially

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

moral cast. Besides describing the development of Kirstein's idiosyncratic preferences, *Mosaic* is also the story of the discovery of a vocation. For Kirstein, who as a young man had seen Pavlova, Ruth St. Denis, and Ted Shawn, and moreover recalled Martha Graham in the 1924 Greenwich Village Follies, "framed in the cutout of a huge perfume bottle," ballet had always been an unappeased obsession.

In Venice in August 1929, the twenty-two-year-old Kirstein, on his way to inspect the basilica of the Church of San Giorgio Degli Greci, turned back when he found the steps crowded with mourners, and a black gondola, with gilded angels and a black catafalque, moored outside. Only later did he learn from a newspaper of the death of Sergei Diaghilev and realize that the scene he had witnessed had been the impresario's funeral. This event would later take on what Kirstein termed a "premonitory meaning." The breakup of the Ballets Russes, which followed soon afterward, left those who had worked with Diaghilev aligned in competing factions: Les Ballets Russes de Monte Carlo, which had inherited most of the original repertory, was under the artistic direction of Léonide Massine, while the smaller, more innovative Les Ballets 1933 was headed by George Balanchine, Diaghilev's last major choreographer. Kirstein, who was ghosting Romola Nijinsky's biography of her husband Vaslav (since 1920 an inmate at a Swiss sanatorium), found himself on the periphery of this rivalry, a not always welcome spectator.

At a comparatively early point, Kirstein had recognized that his own talent was as an "appreciator," one engaged in what he terms, in a typically euphuistic sentence, "the service of authoritative manipulation by others." Kirstein dreamed of establishing an American company that would create a sort of Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk* and, like Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, be a creative catalyst and source of fruitful collaboration for the outstanding painters, composers, choreographers, and poets of the day.

There were compelling reasons why such a project had little likelihood of succeeding—and why it would only be realized, in drastically altered form, fifteen years later. One of these was Kirstein himself. The model for an impresario, according to Kirstein, is Perrault's Puss in Boots, a sort of feline Napoleon, "a sly fellow, prince of improvised tactics and bootstrap strategy." The twenty-six-year-old Kirstein, who as an editor and curator was already acquainted with many artistic and literary figures and had impressive personal and family ties to philanthropic circles, was plainly far more formidable than the bumbling, short-sighted naïf he describes. According to Kirstein, however, as a young man he "existed in an enthralling confusion, full of curiosity but without a plan, and no self-confidence or reason for imagining that such frantic mental activity might lead somewhere."

These were not his only temperamental shortcomings. He was, and remained, famously irascible (sittings for a portrait by Lucien Freud were terminated after a fistfight with the artist in the Crush Bar at Covent Garden). An anonymous article in the *TLS* characterizing Kirstein as "unreliable," "erratic," and with "a public manner so prickly that his chief talent seems to be for making enemies" was the work of an unimpeachable observer: Lincoln Kirstein. He confided his ambitions to Virgil Thomson, who persuasively explained to Kirstein why he was utterly unsuited for the role of impresario he had chosen for himself. Nevertheless, Kirstein was consumed by the

"Captivating and bittersweet novel... Gardner handles it with skill, compassion and whimsy."
—*Publishers Weekly*

The Real Sleeper

A Love Story
By Theodore Roosevelt Gardner II

Order your copy today
At your favorite bookstore
or call (800) 777-7623

ALLEN A. KNOLL, PUBLISHERS
Books for Intelligent People who Read for Fun
ISBN: 0-9627297-8-7 $14.95

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sense that he "was now fatally aligned with a commanding historical process" and "was on a mobile stairway and was now unable to get off."

Mosaic ends tantalizingly in London with Kirstein's famous luncheon meeting with Balanchine. The twenty-nine-year-old choreographer listened politely and noncommittally to the twenty-six-year-old American express his half-formed ideas in halting French, and then he left for a vacation in the Tarn-et-Garonne countryside. In a letter soliciting financial support, written hours later—a letter that proved decisive—Kirstein presciently noted that the venture would "mean a life work to all of us." Several days later, Kirstein woke up with the realization that he must catch the boat train departing for France several hours later and "find Balanchine if I was serious about anything."

That Kirstein's narration is framed by people he has known is appropriate, for his involvement, he acknowledges, "was always more with people than with notions, although the people may have been characterized by congeries of ideas entangling them." At best, this led him to throw his support behind such artists as Balanchine, whose conception of classical dance diverged sharply from his own; at other times, as in the case of Pavel Tchelichev and other painters to whom Kirstein remained loyal over the decades, his taste had a distinct coterie flavor.

Although often fluent and urbane, Kirstein's voice, at its most characteristic, is quirky and unpredictable, and his sentences ornate and overelaborate. No one would easily mistake him for anyone else. If Kirstein's style at times lends itself to great precision and incisiveness, at other times it verges on the gnomic.

Nor is style the only way in which these recollections are circumscribed. Kirstein himself acknowledged the problematic nature of autobiography and its complicated relation to fact, and there is evidence throughout, particularly for the reader familiar with Kirstein's other books, of the writer's unsurprising propensity to subordinate truth to his thematic design. For all of his forthrightness about sexual matters, and unfashionable earnestness about others, one is struck less by Kirstein's self-disclosure than by his fundamental evasiveness.

Early in his account, Kirstein describes a party in New York in 1934. Turning at the sound of broken glass, raised voices, and a brief scuffle, he watched as Hart Crane was seized, rushed to the door, and unceremoniously expelled, to the uniform satisfaction of everyone present, only to return an hour later with an irate cabdriver in tow, explaining that he had lost his money. The loss was made good, and, when Kirstein next looked, Crane and the driver were celebrating their new-won friendship with a drink: Crane, at least, remained for the rest of the evening. A not wholly sympathetic figure, Kirstein has the same talent for insinuating himself back into the reader's confidence.

His friend Walker Evans once characterized a mutual acquaintance as a "sphinx without a riddle." No one ever suggested the same of Kirstein himself. At the end of this fascinating but ultimately unrevealing account, the author, as in most autobiographies, is no less a puzzle than at the beginning.

Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation (Act of August 12. 1970; Section 3685, Title 39, United States Code)

1. Title, THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR; 2. Date of Filing, October 30, 1995; 3. Frequency, Quarterly—March, June, September, December; 4. Office of Publication, 1811 Q Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

6. Names and Addresses of Publisher, Editor: Publisher, Phi Beta Kappa Society, 1811 Q Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009; Editor, Joseph Epstein, 522 Church Street, Evanston, Illinois 60201.

7. Owner: Phi Beta Kappa Society, 1811 Q Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009; No Stockholders.

8. Known Bondholders, Mortgages, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages or Other Securities: None.

9. The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for Federal Income tax purposes have not changed during preceding 12 months.

10. Extent and Nature of Circulation	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	Actual No. Copies Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
A. Total No. Copies Printed (Net Press Run)	28,501	28,476
B. Paid Circulation		
1. Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors and Counter Sales	2,063	3,825
2. Mail Subscriptions	21,133	20,103
C. Total Paid Circulation	23,196	23,928
D. Free Distribution by Mail Carrier or Other Means Samples, Complimentary, and Other Free Copies	1,312	1,326
E. Total Distribution (Sum of C and D)	24,508	25,254
F. Copies Not Distributed		
1. Office Use, Left-Over, Unaccounted, Spoiled After Printing	1,893	2,847
2. Returns From News Agent	2,100	375
G. Total (Sum of E&F—should equal net press run shown in A)	28,501	28,476
H. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation	95%	95%

I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.
Douglas W. Foard

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Reader Replies

The End of the Book?

One might conclude from reading Elizabeth L. Eisenstein's delightful "The End of the Book?" (THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, Autumn 1995) that electronic media have had no impact on the print world—that McLuhanesque statement has been around for centuries, yet there are no signs that the role of the book has been, or will be, altered. She writes, "Western attitudes that have survived for so long are likely to persist, no matter how many new electronic instruments are devised."

Her lively material, however, dances all around McLuhan's central point without coping with it. This point is: *(a)* electronic media are changing us from a Print People to an Oral People, *(b)* Oral People everywhere and always share a mind-set distinct from that of Print People, and *(c)* this mind-set affects responses to such things as time, distance, solitude, etc.

McLuhan's famous The Medium is the Message, meaning that prolonged exposure to a particular communications medium produces an effect regardless of content, is simply an extension of the above. Thus, in order to read, one must withdraw—but in order to use the telephone, one has to be in feedback contact with another person. Thus, reading about, for example, Tokyo makes of that city an object for reflection—but direct dialing Tokyo collapses feelings of separateness, distance, and time. Where we once read about the "inscrutable" Orient, we are now heavily invested in Japanese money markets whose quotations are instantly available on home computers.

One does not have to believe that the book will disappear in order to believe that electronic media shape our attitudes. One is entitled to observe, however, that electronic media have already eliminated many newspapers, and to suspect that the book is not immune. Perhaps a straw in the wind is the frequency with which one now encounters storytellers plying their art—in live performance, on CD, over the radio, etc.

RICHARD K. WINSLOW
Antrim, New Hampshire

ELIZABETH L. EISENSTEIN replies: The original title of my essay was: "Proclaiming the end of the book." Mr. Winslow may have been misled by the editorial decision to shorten it and change it into the more provocative form of a question. Whatever the case, he is correct that I did not address any of McLuhan's sweeping claims. Nor did I consider the "impact of electronic media on the print world." This was because I had a different, much more limited aim in mind; namely, to demonstrate that the end of the book had been proclaimed many times before electronic media had been devised. My conclusion about the persistence of Western attitudes was based on the evidence that I provided and was not intended to offer guidance as to the actual fate of the book. (The boy who repeatedly cried wolf did turn out to be correct in the end, but he might have been wrong once again.)

As for the large and thorny issues raised by the rest of Mr. Winslow's letter, they cannot be treated adequately here. Nevertheless, it must be said that the simple binary scheme: "Oral People" vs. "Print People" drastically underestimates the complexity of interactions at work in any society—let alone our present multimedia one. The thesis of a return to orality leaves out of consideration the displacement of texts not by speech but by silent images. It also fails to distinguish between the oral culture common to preliterate folk and the process of re-oralization which has always co-existed with printing. (How storytelling was affected by the printing of stories has become a favorite topic of investigation by book historians, such as Roger Chartier and his colleagues.) My radio incidentally is usually tuned not to talk but to instrumental music—an aural but not an oral phenomenon.

It may be also worth noting that direct dialing to Tokyo would scarcely collapse my feeling of separateness if the speaker I was addressing spoke only Japanese. It is true that modern communications have become ever more rapid; it is also true that old language barriers have not yet collapsed. As for foreign market quotations being made available on home computers, one wonders how this can be taken to signify a re-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

turn to orality. The same point applies to a great many other new electronic instruments such as fax machines, copiers, word processors, and the like. In my admittedly limited experience, the introduction of the home computer has led to the output of more reading matter and more time spent on silent scanning than ever before.

Historians are well advised to avoid futurology. However, one need not be a prophet to notice that when the weather is variable, straws in the wind point in more than one direction: witness the paperback revolution of the 1960s, the building of Barnes and Noble superstores in the 1990s, and above all the relentless unceasing pressure on shelf space experienced by the custodians of our large libraries. Perhaps placing a question mark after "the end of the book" was not so misleading after all.

What Do We Know About Intelligence?

Linda S. Gottfredson's scholarly article "What Do We Know About Intelligence?" (THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, Winter 1996) brings to mind a comment by Oliver Wendell Holmes:

"A man of very moderate ability may be a good physician, if he devotes himself faithfully to the work. More than this, a positively dull man, in the ordinary acceptation of the term, sometimes makes a safer practitioner than one who has, we will say, five percent. more brains than his average neighbor, but who thinks it is fifty percent. more."

JOHN D. GRIFFITH, M.D.
Houston, Texas

In her article on intelligence, Linda S. Gottfredson states a major premise on which her conclusions are based: ". . . as bias and social advantage are eliminated in American Society. . . ."

If she takes this as a given, in what country does she reside?

She quotes ". . . more than fifty leading scholars of intelligence and allied fields published a statement last December (. . . in the *Wall Street Journal* . . .) [and] concluded [that]. . . [d]isparities among races and social classes are also real, can be measured without bias. . . ."

Without denigrating the peer review qualifications of the *Wall Street Journal* in this field, I must point out this constitutes a non sequitur, inasmuch as identification by "race" and "social class" are biases per se.

The gist of the article seems an attempt to extinguish biases by redefining them or to override them by denying their existence.

The noise-to-signal ratio in the study is overwhelming; the signal is still the persistence of racial and gender bias in America today, and the fact that social classes are diverging at the fastest rate in national history.

MEL RECHTMAN
Decatur, Georgia

LINDA S. GOTTFREDSON replies: Social classes in the United States do seem to be diverging, as Mr. Rechtman suggests. Our disagreement lies in the reasons why. Bias and social advantage still exist. My point was that their elimination would not produce an egalitarian utopia but, paradoxically, ensure its opposite—social hierarchy. Equal opportunity allows differences in talent and ambition to blossom. It gradually replaces the old hierarchies rooted in arbitrary family advantage with ones rooted in individual skill and ability. That is the democratic paradox. To the extent that one form of talent dominates all others in functional importance (as seems true of intelligence in the information age), that talent will increasingly shape the social order.

The democratic paradox remains unappreciated partly because many individuals accept the egalitarian fallacy: namely, that unequal outcomes (in education, income, and the like) must all be due to unequal opportunities (that is, to discrimination and unfair social advantage). However, individuals differ greatly in their talents, interests, and ambitions. The nation continues its effort to level the playing field for the development and expression of these talents (for example, school desegregation, free meals for poor students, state educational funding equalization plans, Head Start), but it has not succeeded in leveling the talents themselves.

As I said (but as Mr. Rechtman seems to have misread or misunderstood), "As inequalities owing to such factors as bias and social advantage are eliminated in American society, inequalities owing to genetic factors increasingly stand out." Democracies can cope with this predicament, but not via misdiagnosis or misplaced blame.

$5 CLASSICAL COMPACT DISCS
Over 1,000 titles (Naxos label). Gregorian Chant to contemporary. Complete cycles of works by major composers. S&H only $2 per order.
Send $2 for catalog
Quality Entertainment
1151 La Tortuga Drive • Vista, CA 92083

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Stuart Bratesman / Dartmouth College

James O. Freedman

Idealism and Liberal Education

"Beautifully written and a pleasure to read. At a time when the idea of the liberal university is under attack from all sides, Freedman has given a wondrous personal reaffirmation of its place in our lives."

—David Halberstam

". . . all who love learning will find something in these pages to ponder with profit."

—Derek Bok

cloth $29.95

Anthony Grafton

Commerce with the Classics

Ancient Books and Renaissance Readers

A history of the relationship between traditions of reading and life in the Renaissance, as reflected in the writings of Alberti, Pico, Budé, and Kepler.

cloth $29.95

Robben W. Fleming

Tempests into Rainbows

Managing Turbulence

"To relive Robben Fleming's life is to relive an American epoch. There was a time when America was at war with its enemies, and a time when America was at war with itself. He writes perceptively from both battlegrounds."

—Daniel Schorr

"Robben Fleming is a giant—a creative and imaginative leader of exceptional talent. All of us can learn from the lessons of his life. His book is a treasure."

—Newton N. Minow

cloth $24.95

Credit card buyers may fax orders to (800) 876-1922.

MICHIGAN

The University of Michigan Press Dept. PD · Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106-1104

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Art for Art's Sake and Literary Life

How Politics and Markets Helped Shape the Ideology and Culture of Aestheticism, 1790–1990

GENE H. BELL-VILLADA

"Professor Bell-Villada has rendered an incomparable service to those probing the sources of the modern aesthetic. . . . It is the soundest book I know on the subject."—Dore Ashton, author of *Monumental Propaganda*

$40 cloth

New Novel, New Wave, New Politics

Fiction and the Representation of History in Postwar France

LYNN A. HIGGINS

A lively account that takes us to the crossroads where culture and politics meet, *New Novel, New Wave, New Politics* dramatically revises our view of a whole generation of important, influential artists.

$40 cloth

again in paper

Human, All Too Human

A Book for Free Spirits

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

Translated by Marion Faber and Stephen Lehmann

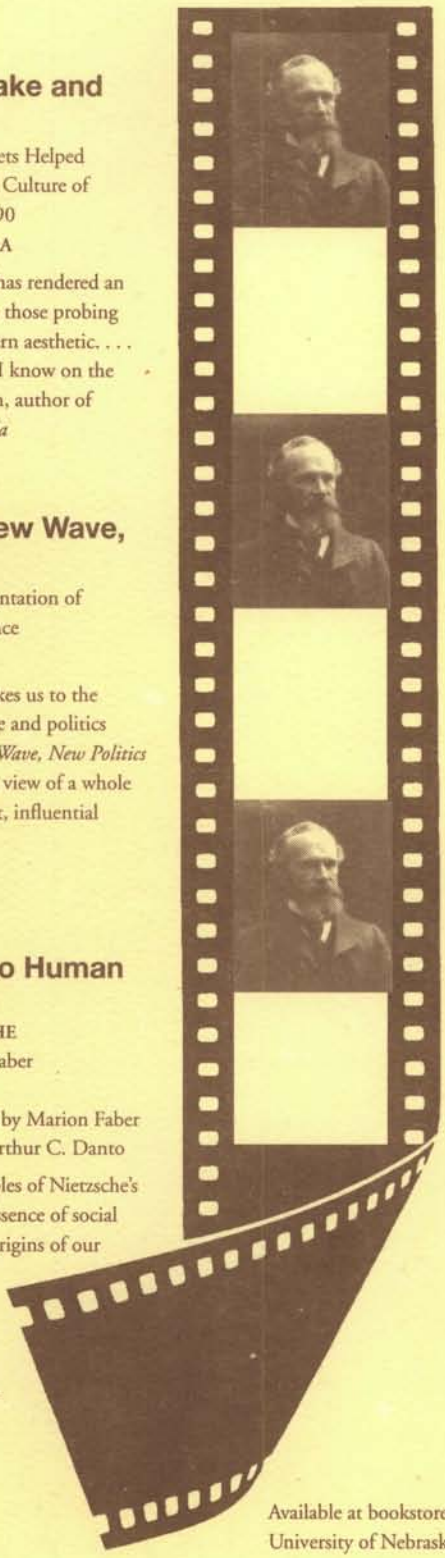
Introduction and notes by Marion Faber

New introduction by Arthur C. Danto

"One of the best examples of Nietzsche's ability to unmask the essence of social reality and expose the origins of our illusions."—*New York Times Book Review*

$12 paper

No sales in British Commonwealth



William James Remembered

EDITED BY LINDA SIMON

Contributions by twenty-five people in all create a complex portrait of William James as a brother, father, philosopher, psychologist, teacher, and friend. As editor Linda Simon suggests, these diverse essays vividly evoke "the vitality of James's personality, the freshness and excitement of his ideas, and the buoyancy of his spirit."

$30 cloth

Some Problems of Philosophy

A Beginning of an Introduction to Philosophy

WILLIAM JAMES

Introduction by Ellen Kappy Suckiel

With the clarity that William James deemed obligatory, *Some Problems of Philosophy* outlines his theory of perception.

$12 paper

Essays in Radical Empiricism

WILLIAM JAMES

Introduction by Ellen Kappy Suckiel

Preface by Ralph Barton Perry

Essays in Radical Empiricism shows William James concerned with ultimate reality and moving toward a metaphysical system. Included in the twelve essays are such seminal essays as "Does Consciousness Exist?" and "A World of Pure Experience."

$12 paper

Available at bookstores.
University of Nebraska Press Lincoln NE • 800-755-1105

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED